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THE NATION

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WILL SECHABA DANIEL MONTSITSI ALSO BE BEATEN TO DEATH?
(Editorial by Joel Bolnick)

Caught in the Purse Strings
ACADEMIA HAS HOCKED ITS AUTONOMY
Mary Ellen Leary

At Moscow's Book Fair
VISITORS TO THE JEWISH BOOTH
Joseph S. Drew

New York's Unrepentant Sinner
CAN CON EDISON BE BORN AGAIN?
Robert Lekachman

Ronald Radosh / Life on the Old Left

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LETTERS

we are threatened

Long Island City, N.Y.
Your "Articles" section always seems to show a preponderence of male contributors. Why is this so? It would appear that your policy is unfair to the vast numbers of female professors and intellectuals around our country; they certainly deserve a fairer degree of representation in our press.

Perhaps the National Organization of Women ought to look into your publishing policies. Or perhaps you will take a closer look at your policies and change them so they represent contemporary times, rather than the 1930s or 1960s. If so, many readers will welcome such changes.

Yolanda Auletta, Professor
Fiorello H. LaGuardia Community College, CUNY

New York City
Several complaints have come to my attention regarding the fact that your magazine does not publish a representative number of articles by women. The National Organization of Women will be contacting your office in the months ahead. Requests by women for an investigation of your publishing policies have been made to various agencies concerned with equal rights.

One would certainly hope that your past and present policies of accepting about 10 percent by women contributors would increase to the point where contributors would represent the actual number of women submitting articles and the number of women in our population.

A word to the wise is sufficient to bring change. I certainly hope that words do work. Otherwise, actions will be undertaken on this.

Esther Liebert, Professor
Affirmative Action Coordinator
(Higher Education Associate) Baruch College, CUNY

An editorial on these letters appears in this issue.

peace in the Middle East

Baltimore, Md.
Concerning the two pieces, "The Israelis Watch Begin" and "Tough Talk from a Dove" [*The Nation*, Dec. 24], I would like to make the following comments: first, because it is necessary to be clear, let me say that I am a Jew and I am not opposed to the state of Israel. Having said that, permit me to say that I am opposed to a foreign policy that brings on three wars in less than three decades. And unless Israel is now willing to give up much of its captured territory and depend on the United Nations along with the great industrial powers of the West and East to keep the peace then the Jewish state is not "long for this planet."

The Semitic peoples are all cousins, all members of the same family and, while it may be true that no quarrels are as bitter as those which occur among members of the same family, in this instance the peace of the entire world is at stake and another war in the Middle East could spread like the plague and result in the destruction of the planet.

Peace can be kept by good sense on all sides. There should be a standing, well-equipped army under the control of the United Nations and the sale of armaments by any country to any other country should be made a capital crime. Short of such severity, peace can easily evaporate and once it does, so will most of the world's population, if not the world itself.

Henry Nordin

on 'teen pregnancy'

Detroit, Mich.
I would like to commend Michael Castleman, author of "Why Teenagers Get Pregnant" [*The Nation*, Nov. 26]. I found the article to be quite enlightening, and written in a very readable style. I hope to see more by this talented writer in your magazine in the future.

Clifford Kashtan

EDITORIALS

Humphrey and Metcalf

Two United States Senators died within a day of each other this month. The first was Lee Metcalf of Montana, on January 12 in Helena. The second was Hubert H. Humphrey at his home in Minnesota on January 13.

The nation has been celebrating (his word) the life and death of Humphrey with the most magnificent pomp. It has scarcely marked the passing of Metcalf, who died as quietly as he had lived and who was a man at least as remarkable as his more famous contemporary.

Not much remains to be said about Hubert Humphrey within the conventions of *nil nisi bonum*. The touching circumstance of his courage in the face of a fatal illness, combined with a political history that brought him almost to the White House, made it inevitable that he would be given a splendid state funeral. In fact, he had two of them, in the capitals of his nation and of his state, and he was praised for all he had hoped to do more than for what he actually accomplished.

There can be no doubt that his aims, for his country and for himself, were lofty. The undercurrent of sympathy for him that ran through much of the funeral oratory sprang from the recognition that his ambitions sometimes got in the way of his larger aspirations.

Lee Metcalf was almost the opposite of Humphrey as a political figure. He was modest, retiring and pessimistic. He began his career in Montana as something of an insider, but quickly became an outsider, vigorously opposing the "interests." Robert Sherrill, writing in this magazine six years ago, described Metcalf as "a very worthy offshoot of that unique middle-class radicalism that crops up so often in the Upper Midwest-Upper Rocky Mountain states and that has produced George Norris, Floyd Olson, Burton Wheeler, Robert La Follette, Elmer Benson, William Langer and R.F. Pettigrew."

During his twenty-five years in Congress, seventeen of them in the Senate, he worked effectively for all the main progressive issues. No Senator had a better record on questions affecting labor, the environment and education. Unspectacular as he was in his behavior, there was no more skillful legislator working behind the scenes to try to make the corporate world more so pon- sible. If he became depressed by the power acity of the corporations, particularly the public , he never abandoned the fight to control their activities.

He was floor manager of the bill to control strip mining that was signed into law a week before he died. It was not as strong a bill as he wanted but he knew it was all that a Senate whose majority were far to his Right would pass and, technician that he was, he steered it to passage. In every way he could think of he attacked the concentration of economic power and its near-stranglehold on the government. An example of his persistence in that effort was the Federal Advisory Committees Act which sharply curbed the secretive operations of that tentacular network of insiders.

Humphrey would have been the one to give the eulogy at Metcalf's funeral. They came from the same tradition,

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however divergent their subsequent paths. They co-sponsored several bills, including one on the Youth Conservation Camps, and the Wilderness Act. Perhaps Hubert Humphrey would have said that he wished he could have joined Metcalf and the second wave of Senators (after Morse and Gruening) who opposed the war in Vietnam, and that he bitterly regretted his fear of and misplaced loyalty to Lyndon Johnson. It might have been a moving tribute from the better side of Hubert Humphrey's divided nature.

But it was too late. Lee Metcalf died as he had lived, privately, the almost invisible Senator. The next day Hubert Humphrey also was gone, mourned in a blaze of light.

Hospitality to Women

Two women academics, professors both at institutions in New York City, take *The Nation* to task for allegedly discriminating in its columns against members of their sex. We publish their letters (which were addressed to James J. Storrow Jr., then the Publisher, and both of which arrived in our offices on the same day of this month) in this issue's Letters column.

We publish these quite rude communications partly out of a sense of fairness and partly because they display an approach to the question of increasing the access of women to all areas of American life that we presume to think is both mistaken and self-defeating. In the course of our argument, we shall adduce some evidence that *The Nation* has in fact had a quite remarkable record of hospitality to women writers during its 112 years of existence.

Before springing to our own defense, however, we would call attention to the tone of the letters from Professors Auletta and Liebert. In a word, it is threatening. The former contents herself with the thought that "perhaps" the National Organization of Women (NOW) "ought to look into" our "publishing policies." Fair enough. Professor Liebert, on the other hand, is much more rugged. She hopes that "a word to the wise" will do the trick. "Otherwise," she warns, "actions will be undertaken on this." The nature of the action is suggested by the line about "requests by women for an investigation" already having been made "to various agencies concerned with equal rights."

This is news to us; we have not yet been called to account for our behavior by any such agency. And if, under some statute still unknown to us after diligent research (and not cited by the professor), we were hauled on some carpet for failing to publish "a representative number of articles by women," we would stoutly resist this inquisition. We would do so on the grounds of common sense and independence of editorial judgment long before we were forced to fall back on the plain and simple guarantees written in the First Amendment to the Constitution. And, assuming for the moment that any such agency had a right to pry into matters of editorial judgment, we believe that we could persuade it of our innocence and perhaps even of our bona fides.

We do not mean, by these observations, to poke a finger of fun at the constitutional holes in the arguments

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and threats of the two professors (especially of Professor Liebert). They were clearly only carrying out the orders of their NOW unit, most dutifully. But perhaps it is time for a fact or two.

The first fact, which we confidently assert, is that few publications in this country have a better record of publishing the writings of women, and that record goes back a long way. It stems, we think, from the general attitudes toward life of a succession of editors and their intent to present the work of interesting writers, whoever they may be. Those values prevailed both before and after the tenure of Freda Kirchwey as Editor of this magazine (1932-55). Right now women outnumber men on the small staff that edits and produces this weekly, including the Literary Editor, the Copy Editor and the Poetry Editor. Our regular, and widely admired, Dance and Architecture critics are both women. A male Literary Editor has been a rarity here and one recalls the names Margaret Marshall, Elizabeth Sutherland, Helen Yglesias and Beverly Gross, predecessors of Elizabeth Pochoda in that job.

The names of women who have written for us are so numerous that it would be invidious to start a list. A year or two ago someone in an idle hour went through six months of back issues and found that the female percentage of all contributors was 30 (not the 10 percent Professor Liebert picked out of the air). But the point is that statistics cannot tell the story, as we believe most thoughtful people will agree.

We are well aware of the argument that every branch of human enterprise claims that it must be exempt from the demands of the concept of "affirmative action" on

AFTER BIKO, MONTSITSI?

Joel Bolnick, who before his arrest was a graduate student in political science, is now in California; his statement came to us through Peter Dreyer, also a South African now living in California, and a frequent contributor to The Nation. *The jails of South Africa, these young men tell us, are strictly segregated—except in the case of political prisoners, when whites and blacks are caged in common cell blocks, presumably because the apartheid-obsessed authorities conceive this enforced fraternity to be an exquisite punishment of the white dissenters. Nothing could be more stupid from the viewpoint of the South African Government, since racial fraternity is what it has most to fear, but then stupidity is the hallmark of Vorster's malign rule.*

On June 11, 1977, I was detained, and held incommunicado, by the South African Security Police, along with four fellow white students and twenty black members of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). Of the twenty-five detained on that day, twelve have been released. Thirteen, all of them black students, remain in detention somewhere in South Africa. For the last six months they have languished in solitary confinement, without recourse to the courts of law. They have been barred visits from their lawyers, from magistrates, even from their families. Their only contact with other people has been with the wardens who feed them, the interrogators who question them, and the Security Police who torture or assault them. They will remain in detention until such time as the authorities see fit to release them.

I can recall many gruesome details from my two weeks in John Vorster's Maximum Security Jail. My most vivid and terrifying memory is of being shocked almost nightly by screams of pain and anguish emanating from neighboring cells. In the morning I would be escorted by the wardens to the showers, where I would wash in silence along with my fellow detainees. The welts, wounds and bruises all over their bodies gave horrifying testimony to the beatings that the black prisoners had received the night before.

One of the black prisoners was Sechaba Daniel Montsitsi, then president of the SSRC. With the exception of Steve Biko, Sechaba was the most prominent black leader to be detained in South Africa last year. In the townships of South Africa his name has been a household word ever since he took over the SSRC leadership after Khotso Seatlalo had fled the country.

Sechaba knew that the white students stood a far greater chance than did the blacks of securing an early release. He therefore managed to talk with some of them and advise them to approach Shun Chetty, an Indian attorney who would represent the black students, suggesting that they inform Chetty of the police brutality which some of the whites had actually witnessed and aid Chetty in bringing these incidents to the attention of the public and the courts.

It so happened that these white students were released within a short time, and despite the personal risk involved, began taking the necessary steps. I was kept in detention for several more days and during that time I saw Sechaba at the showers. He was in good physical health, but our fellow detainees were, to the best of my knowledge, still being beaten and brutalized.

A week after my release, Sechaba Montsitsi was reported by the *World*, since banned, to be in critical condition in an emergency ward at the Johannesburg General Hospital. The report was hastily denied by Minister of Police James Kruger, but later confirmed by the police themselves when they issued a statement to the effect that Montsitsi's condition had improved and that he had been returned to the cells.

Sechaba Daniel Montsitsi is still in detention. It has been rumored that he was so severely beaten and tortured by the police as to be crippled for life. Is it unreasonable to presume that he is suffering the same fate that befell his mentor, Steve Biko? Must he become the forty-eighth political detainee known to have died in South Africa's jails since 1963, before his plight is brought to the attention of the world?

As one of the last people to see Sechaba Montsitsi alive and well, I urge whoever reads my words to express indignation at the barbaric behavior of the South African Police.

JOEL BOLNICK

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the ground of its uniqueness. Before we make our own claim to that exemption, we would note that *The Nation* has always defended "affirmative action" as part of its long support for fairer conditions of opportunity for all. But it seems to us that for magazines there are peculiar difficulties in the application of abstract standards for proportions of contributors, whether measured by sex, profession or any other criterion. We do our best to choose for this journal writing that we believe will prove important and interesting to our readers, as we imagine them, regardless of its source. If that task were complicated by the imposition of quotas (pardon the expression) based on sex, age, race or any other consideration, we believe the job would be impossible and the results quite unsatisfactory.

The professors from NOW have the freedom not to read what we print, and of course to propagandize against our editorial standards if they are so minded. But we think they are not advancing the cause they proclaim when they vaguely threaten "action" against *The Nation* or any other journal. Would it be fair on our part to recommend to the national leadership of NOW that they look into the crude pressure tactics of the branch of that organization which the two professors purport to represent?

Murder in Nicaragua

Bogotá, January 17

Long after most of his generation had exhausted itself in the struggle against the Somoza dynasty of Nicaragua, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro was still carrying on the fight from the tribunal of his Managua newspaper *La Prensa*. But last week Chamorro's voice was finally silenced: the 53-year-old publisher was gunned down by paid assassins.

The self-confessed leader of the assassins, professional gunman Silvio Pena, claimed that he had been paid $14,285 to do the job by a Cuban exile in Miami who is said to be the head of a plasma exporting firm in Nicaragua. The firm had been under attack by *La Prensa* for selling the blood of poor Nicaraguans to U.S. companies, but nobody who knows Nicaragua was convinced by Pena's story; too many connections lead back to President Anastasio Somoza.

Located just down the street from *La Prensa*, the blood factory, Plasmaferesis, operated until recently out of a series of buildings owned by Somoza. After Chamorro's murder, a rampaging crowd of 30,000 destroyed Plasmaferesis, as well as a nearby textile factory belonging to Somoza and ten other buildings, causing damages estimated at $18 million. When I visited Chamorro at his newspaper offices last year, he told me that the Cuban exiles who ran the factory were in partnership with Somoza and suggested that I visit the plant to get an idea of how Plasmaferesis and Somoza were exploiting poor Nicaraguans. (According to Nicaraguan business sources, the company earned an annual profit of approximately $1.7 million.)

Surrounded by a high wall that hid the installations from passers-by, Plasmaferesis could be entered only through a heavily chained gate controlled by three armed guards. There were good reasons for these precautions, because inside, lined up in an open-air pavilion, were the dregs of Managua's slums, unshaven, hungry men who had come to sell their blood. Dr. Castelar, the Cuban in charge of the plant when I visited it, explained to me that he really couldn't provide any details about the operation, since that was the responsibility of Dr. Pedro Ramos, the director of the company. Ramos, the man Pena accuses of having paid him to kill Chamorro, now says he is merely the company's representative in Miami and that Pena's story is "all lies." However that may be, it is unlikely that Ramos is the one ultimately responsible for Chamorro's death. As any foreign businessman operating in Nicaragua will confirm, nothing important happens in that small Central American country without Somoza's knowledge and consent.

Plasmaferesis was one of many enterprises owned or partly controlled by Somoza, who directs the country's forty-six biggest companies, in addition to owning 8,260 square miles of land. It seems most improbable that Ramos would order the murder of a newspaperman as well known as Chamorro without consulting his partner and patron, President Somoza. After all, why would a man cut off his source of livelihood by crossing his chief benefactor? (The numerous Cuban exiles who work for Somoza, including his principal propagandist, have found a home in Nicaragua only because they serve Somoza's right-wing political interests.) Somoza, who claimed he would seek Ramos's extradition from the United States if the country's military judges "deemed it necessary," may have been inspired to pin Chamorro's murder on a Cuban exile after the much-publicized assassination of Chile's former Foreign Minister, Orlando Letelier, in Washington, D.C., reportedly by Cuban exiles acting for the Pinochet regime. Chamorro's widow, for one, does not accept Pena's confession. It was contradictory, said Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, and "is directed at putting the blame on a foreigner who had already left the country. We believe that the authorities do not want to get at the truth."

A big, blunt-spoken man, Chamorro was a far greater threat to Somoza than to any Cuban exile. Jailed ten times during the forty-two-year-old Somoza family rule, Chamorro was both an unrelenting newspaper critic of Somoza and the leader of the Democratic Liberation Union (UDEL), a coalition of opposition political parties, including the Social Christians and dissidents from the traditional liberals and conservatives, as well as two labor federations. UDEL was generally thought to be a paper tiger until the second half of last year when a combination of events posed the most serious threat to the regime in recent memory. First, General Somoza, 51, suffered a heart attack that has since forced him to limit his work to three hours a week. According to one well-informed Nicaraguan source, Somoza's ambition to bequeath the dynasty to his son is meeting stiff opposition, even among the normally loyal Somoza factions, including the National Guard, which doubles as Nicaragua's army and police. As usual, Somoza's response to such discontent was yet another crackdown. "The repression in some rural areas is worse than ever," said my source, adding that "it is also bad in poorer areas of Managua. There have been many tear-gas attacks on innocent

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people, and many have been 'detained.' [Meaning they were hauled off to jail for interrogation under torture]."

Somoza's failing health was not the only thing worrying the pudgy dictator. The Sandinista front of National Liberation, a left-wing guerrilla group, launched simultaneous offensives in northern and southern Nicaragua which, while military failures, brought forth a heretofore unsuspected support from business and political circles as well as from the increasingly critical Catholic Church. Chamorro seized this opportunity to issue a five-point plan in UDEL's name for the "democratization" of Nicaragua, including labor, political and press freedoms and the appointment of an officer to head the National Guard who was not a relative of Somoza.

"As long as Somoza can corrupt the army," Chamorro told me, "as long as he allows that Praetorian gang to extort bribes and terrorize the people, there is no hope of democracy in Nicaragua. The worst thing about this dictatorship is that Somoza has deliberately destroyed the moral fiber of the country." Chamorro then went on to detail some of the results of that corruption, including the torture of prisoners which he witnessed in March 1976, during his last stint in a Managua jail; how police agents had robbed the residence of Managua's Archbishop Miguel Obando Brayo and threatened to kill him; and how hundreds of people were shot down in the streets of Managua during the regime's periodic slaughters. He also had harsh words for the United States, which handpicked the founder of the Somoza dynasty in 1936 and has continued to bankroll the regime with aid, military training and arms during all these decades. "If only the United States would stop supporting this dictatorship," said Chamorro, "and leave us alone to take care of our own affairs, we would have been rid of Somoza a long time ago." One can only hope that his murder will cause the United States to pause and reflect on its continuing support of Somoza. PENNY LERNOUX

The NAACP Out of Bounds

At his news conference on January 13, President Carter criticized the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for its newly stated position on energy which runs counter to that of the administration. But unlike the reaction last summer, when he publicly chastised Vernon Jordan Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, who had accused the President of failing to help blacks, there was no chorus of defense from blacks and liberals for the country's oldest civil rights organization.

The NAACP's seeming alignment with the oil industry had been deeply disturbing the members and supporters of the organization, and Carter's sharp reaction brought the controversy into the open. Now the leadership of the NAACP is trying to play down the policy statement.

The situation illustrates the difficulty a civil rights organization can run into when it tries to tackle problems which may be real enough to its constituency but which lie outside its sphere of expertise. Further, the controversy shows the serious conflict of interest that black leaders can run into when they accept positions on corporate boards. And it points to a possible dilemma facing black technocrats when the interests of their employers are at odds with the interests of black Americans.

The development of the NAACP's energy position can be traced to the ambition of Margaret Bush Wilson, who was elected chairman of the board of directors two years ago. A strong-willed lawyer from St. Louis, she wanted to tackle some problems not necessarily defined as civil rights, one of them being the effect of energy shortage on poor minorities.

At the NAACP's annual convention, held in St. Louis last summer, Mrs. Wilson set up a private briefing on energy for selected board members and others. Executives of the Monsanto Company conducted the briefing. That may have seemed appropriate at the time—Monsanto has headquarters in St. Louis and Mrs. Wilson sits on the board of directors of this corporation that is heavily involved with oil and oil products—but the effect was disastrous. The convention adopted a resolution calling for an energy conference, and it was held in Washington in November. Two months later, the board adopted a statement of policy on energy that opposed the President's proposal but was, according to one NAACP official, in the interest of black people. It endorsed deregulation of natural gas, which Carter says would be a boon to the oil industry, and differed with the President on distribution of oil revenues to consumers, money the official said would not go to poor people with no income. It also opposed Carter's desire to reduce funds for existing nuclear breeders, his emphasis on conservation, higher gasoline tax, insulation of dwellings (property owners, not tenants, would benefit, the official said) and conversion to coal.

The NAACP moved into the energy area with no one on its staff expert in the subject; therefore, it was dependent on outsiders to provide the knowledge. But instead of seeking advice from all sides, the board was persuaded to industry's position by blacks connected with the oil industry. There are indications that this was deliberate. A draft of the final statement of policy, from one of those technocrats, carried a note that said, "Our liberal friends might not like it, but it's time to go to the mat with the liberals."

There is a feeling that the whole thing was orchestrated. Said one NAACP official opposed to the statement, "*The Wall Street Journal* had it before Clarence Mitchell," referring to the head of the NAACP's Washington bureau. Staff members were incensed, as much because they were squeezed out of any discussion as by the substance of the statement.

Meanwhile, the Wilson forces are trying to calm the storm. They changed the title of the board statement from "Board Energy Policy Statement" to "Statement of Position on a National Energy Policy." Further, Mrs. Wilson hopes to shut off the controversy without calling a special meeting of the board before its regular meeting in April.

At a time when it is not yet out of financial trouble, leaders of the NAACP must decide how closely their organization can afford to be linked to any industry, especially if it appears that the organization is embarking on a major change of course. Jokes are already making the rounds that the NAACP has finally found a way to solve its money problems. PAUL DELANEY

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NEW YORK'S UNREPENTANT SINNER

CAN CON EDISON BE BORN AGAIN?

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

The legions of Washington bureaucrats at HUD and elsewhere, thus far laboring in vain to formulate an urban program acceptable to the nuclear engineer in the White House, might give a profitable thought to one of the most vital of city services—assurance of inexpensive and reliable light and power. The older cities of the Midwest and Northeast now rely upon a deteriorating network of underground transmission lines and antique generating equipment that are certain, if nothing is done, to increase the frequency of brownouts and blackouts in years to come. Dare I mention once more in *The Nation* that, unpopular though such "radical" solutions are in President Carter's and Jerry Brown's America, public ownership may be the last and best chance to restore this backward sector of private enterprise to something approximating reasonable efficiency?

As usual, problems like this one, which simmer along unhappily elsewhere, gaudily erupt in New York City, and never more abruptly than the blackout of last July 13. Next to Richard Nixon in his days of dominion, Consolidated Edison has long been this pathetic metropolis's favorite villain. Its rates are high, at best its service is barely adequate, all too often the manners of its employees fluctuate between indifference and insolence, and twice in a dozen years the system has utterly collapsed. To suffering New Yorkers, Con Ed's sins are as conspicuous as is its failure to repent.

One must nerve oneself to examine the record. In fairness even to Con Ed, the blackout of 1965 was a regional calamity triggered by events elsewhere in the state. Nevertheless, it produced a spate of investigations which identified numerous managerial and engineering flaws in Con Ed's operations. Among them were inadequate selection and training of control-room personnel, dangerous reliance upon Westchester transmission lines so close to one another in a narrow geographical corridor that disaster to one might readily involve several, sloppy maintenance of vital equipment, absence of auxiliary generators to restart the system, and a record of transmission outages that was bad by general industry standards. Between 1965 and 1977, at least two outside studies had specifically critized control-room design and procedures. The Public Service Commission, which deserves its own lumps, exhorted Con Ed to straighten up and do better. On the record, Con Ed tried, but not hard enough, and the PSC seldom checked to see whether anyone was following its advice.

Recently off the presses is former Mayor Beame's swan song, the bulky report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Energy Failures, released at the end of November. Appointed by Mr. Beame, the three commissioners, Chairman Ira Millstein, Paul J. Curran and Samuel R. Pierce Jr. are senior partners of eminently respectable and exceedingly expensive Manhattan law firms. As Con Ed did not neglect to mention in its feeble rebuttal of their report, Millstein represented Beame before the Security and Exchange Commission when that body probed into the city's murky maneuvering to avert the open bankruptcy which in the first weeks of the Koch regime appears to be still entirely possible. Curran and Pierce are flagrant Republicans who in time past occupied various prosecutorial and judicial posts in the gift of Republican Presidents or Governors.

It is a credit to the trio that their report utterly refrains from any unwise attempt to convert our local sow's ear into a silk purse. It may be, as shortly I shall argue, that their recommendations for improvement halt short of the drastic therapy necessary, but the tale told by the report, *The New York Times*'s weak editorial demurrers to the contrary notwithstanding (on local issues it is often the most conservative paper in town), is a sharp indictment of Con Edison. The wild events that marked the night of July 13 and the daylight hours of July 14 were neither an act of God, as company spokesmen initially asserted* nor, as later claimed, the human error of an understandably flustered systems operator.

The blackout drama began at 8:37 P.M., when bolts of lightning apparently struck two transmission lines, Feeders W97 and W98 in northern Westchester. "Normally," in the report's words, "the feeders are automatically restored to service with barely a dip in the lights." Not this time. "The malfunction of circuit breakers and protective circuitry meant that 2,000 mw of import capability from the New York Power Pool" were lost. A chain reaction next knocked out Indian Point No. 3 and with it another 870 mw of capacity.

These losses imposed additional burdens on other lines which linked Con Ed with imported power. By 8:41 the Pennsylvania-Jersey-Maryland assistant interconnection dispatcher in Valley Forge was warning of an overload on the Linden-Goethals interconnections between Con Ed and Public Service Electric & Gas of New Jersey, a part of the PJM system. By 9:02, as the consequence of Con Ed's failure either to increase power generation within New York City or to shed load by cutting off some customers in order to save the system,

* Con Ed has subsequently denied that it blamed God. However, the report notes that at 8:23 A.M. on July 14, the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company issued a statement by Joyce Tucker, at the time Assistant Vice President for Public Information, which specifically implicated the deity: "I know that Mr. Luce did have these two lengthy conversations with [the Mayor], in which Mr. Luce explained what had happened . . . and the fact that it really was an act of God."

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the company had lost all but three of its crucial interconnections to the outside world—the Jamaica-Valley Stream line to the Long Island Lighting Company, the Linden-Goethals tie to PJM, and Feeder W80 from the Millwood substation north to the Pleasant Valley substation.

The last and strongest of these three was dangerously overloaded, operating for a time well above its short-term emergency rating. Better aware of the situation than anyone in Con Ed's employ, the senior pool dispatcher of the New York Power Pool (a much cooler customer than his Con Ed colleague) had warned the Con Ed system operator for the *third* time out of a total of *eight* admonitions that he must shed load forthwith. While all this was going on, the chief system operator of Con Ed, the superior of the poor soul in the New York City Energy Control Center, was trying to instruct his subordinate by telephone from his Yorktown Heights home, where the lights had already failed. By the dim illumination of kerosene lamps, and aided by only sketchy information, the chief system operator did his inadequate best.

At 9:09 the New York Power Pool* ordered Con Ed to reduce voltage by 5 percent and a minute later directed LILCO to aid its neighbor by taking similar action. LILCO actually complied three minutes sooner than Con Ed. But even though at 9:18 voltage was further reduced, this time by 8 percent, only sixty seconds later Con Ed lost all of its 345 KV transmission lines to the north. Yet at 9:20 when the power pool dispatcher issued his sixth, increasingly exigent warning to shed load, Con Ed inexplicably had still not reacted. Indeed not until 9:22 was it "first *suggested*" (italics in original) by the chief system operator in Yorktown Heights that load at last be shed in order to save the Linden-Goethals interconnection.

The situation continued to deteriorate. At 9:23 LILCO separated itself from Con Ed to avoid blacking out its own customers. The LILCO loss now heavily overloaded the Linden-Goethals interconnection—the last link of importance to external power. Much too late, between 9:23 and 9:27, the Con Ed system operator attempted to shed load by manually pulling a series of switches. He was glaringly unsuccessful because the unsustainable overload on Linden-Goethals failed substantially to diminish. The consequence was loss of Linden-Goethals at 9:29 At that instant, Con Ed was "islanded" from outside succor.

The next line of protection then proceeded to crumble, as "An *automatic load shedding system—designed to limit the extent of the power failure—failed to operate as intended.*" (Italics in original.) This was equipment which Con Ed had acquired after the 1965 blackout. On the first occasion when it was needed it calamitously faltered. The dreary culmination of this large assortment of mechanical defects and human miscues came at 9:36, when the entire Con Ed service area plunged into blackness, relieved only by the intermittent flickering of candles and the happy cries of citizens engaged in ad hoc redistribution of appliances, furniture, jewelry, clothing, etc.

It is necessary to emphasize, especially in view of Con Ed's complaints about government restrictions upon construction of new generating stations, that the blackout could have been averted even after islanding had taken place if Con Ed had been able to operate as much as 78 percent of its generating capacity within the five boroughs of New York City. But at 9:29 only 54.9 percent of its in-city capacity was in actual service. For one reason or another, half a dozen of its plants were either shut down for maintenance, under repair, or unable to operate at full-rated capacity. Under PSC rules, the customers were assessed rates guaranteed to earn Con Ed its normal rate of return on all of its rate base, however little of it at any time was of any use.

The events which preceded the blackout cast a sufficiently dismal shadow on Con Ed performance. Worse was to follow. Between twelve and twenty-five hours elapsed before power was restored. In the temperate tones of a 1967 Federal Power Commission commentary on the earlier blackout, delay spells the difference between an "incident of annoyance" and one of "critical severity." Some hundreds of storekeepers could write their own gloss upon these words after surveying the devastation wreaked upon their property.

Restarting a huge electrical system is a complex process that requires, among other essentials, electrical power either from standby emergency generators or outside sources. Care must be exercised lest premature restoration coincide with a power surge that blows out the system all over again, as every electrical motor in town turns on at the same instant. Preplanning of renewed service is an obvious precaution. But not, apparently, to Con Ed. It had "no current pre-studied restoration plan." Nor did it have enough standby equipment to restore the oil pressure in the pipes surrounding transmission lines which both cools and insulates. In sum, the blackout needn't have occurred. Once it happened, service should much more quickly have been renewed.

Although Con Ed naturally resents the report's deadly chronicle, managed to catch its authors in one badly garbled quotation, and resists major recommendations for change, it has not to date seriously disputed major charges based upon the work of a talented staff of attorneys, economists and engineers, headed by Dr. Carolyn Brancato, an able young economist with considerable experience in utility regulation who teaches at the Lehman campus of the City University. Indeed the utility's first comments upon the report, on December 2 and 3, tacitly concede previous shortcomings in the course of claiming that "We have already taken many steps to change operating procedures, staffing, and equipment because of lessons learned on July 13." The company promises a final report that will list "additional steps to be taken to reduce the chances of another blackout." This report was unavailable when this article was written.

Con Ed did alter its procedures and acquire new equipment after 1965. The changes were of little avail. The automatic load-shedding equipment didn't work. The op-

* Established in 1966, the pool consists of seven private electric utilities in the state, plus the Power Authority of New York State; its objectives are coordination and mutual aid.

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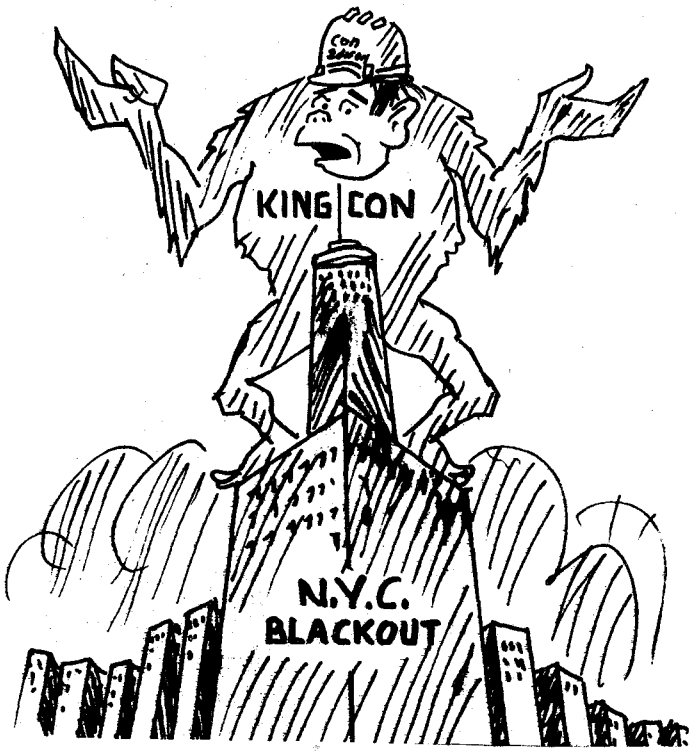

Roir

erators of new gas turbines had been sent home for the day. Recommendations to modernize the control room were ignored. The system operator turned out to be untrained, untested for reactions to severe stress, and suffering into the bargain from a condition of hypertension so severe and of such long standing that he could not testify at public hearings. He was about as useful as a surgeon with Parkinson's disease. On the uncontroverted evidence, Con Ed is and has been a power company prey to frequent equipment failure, unprotected by adequate emergency planning, and short of auxiliary equipment for rapid restoration of service after blackout.

The regulatory agencies have been no help. The Public Service Commission sedulously refrained from monitoring service reliability, lest it seem to interfere with managerial prerogatives. The Federal Power Commission timidly resisted suggestions that it test its ambiguous powers to regulate individual utilities. Even *The New York Times*, Con Ed's best media friend, admitted that "The equipment failures cannot all be attributed to the quirks of technology. The commission [of inquiry] argues persuasively that they revealed inadequate quality control, testing and maintenance."

What to do? The commission offers two major suggestions. The first is enlargement of Con Ed's board of trustees by appointment of three public trustees, one apiece by the Governor, the Mayor of New York City and the County Executive of Westchester. The second urges formulation by the Public Service Commission of appropriate performance standards and the imposition of financial penalties upon Con Ed stockholders for significant failures to meet the standards. Undeniably these are stronger recommendations than any made by earlier students of the utility. They "make sense" to the *Daily News*. *The New York Times* cautiously allowed that "Whatever the merits of these particular recommendations, the commission has carried the debate to a deeper level."

It may be that adoption by the legislature of the proposals is the most that can be politically expected. All the same, both recommendations have serious drawbacks. The somnolent sixteen, including one *New York Times* executive, now on the Con Ed board, manifestly paid little attention to their corporation—that being in the grand tradition of outside directors of most large corporations. Will the public trustees necessarily perform more vigilantly? With the best will in the world (not automatically to be assumed), the three political appointees are unlikely to alter the rules of the managerial game unless their jobs are full time, their political masters offer united and undeviating support, and they are granted adequate independent staff and internal subpoena powers. If any of these conditions is missing, the danger is genuine that false reassurance will be offered to the clients and, in the event of a third disaster, a new excuse for Con Ed managers.

A nice touch of equity animates any plan that reduces dividends instead of raising rates. Almost gloatingly, the *Daily News* speculated that "It doesn't take much to imagine the thunder Con Ed's management would hear from stockholders if dividends were cut regularly by such penalties. Top brass would either shape up or ship out in a hurry. . . ." President Arthur Hauspurg enunciated a less pleasing course of events: "To attempt to place on the stockholders of electrical utilities the financial responsibility for all damages caused by a power failure would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to attract investment in utility securities. To accept such a liability, investors would demand a far higher rate of return to compensate for the financial risks." As usual, "Ultimately, the consumer would be required to pay more for utility services." How important this caveat is depends on the amount of new investment Con Ed must make in the near future. One must add that over the years the PSC has shown scant concern for ratepayer interests. Although Governor Carey's recent nomination of state Sen. Karen Burstein as a member of the PSC is encouraging, Mr. Carey has yet to fill the place of Alfred Kahn, now a Washington regulator, as chairman.

In the light of political and economic reality, the above remedies may be the best attainable and yet still inadequate—particularly if they are to be applied by the Con Ed management personnel now in office. Charles Luce came to the top job a decade ago with excellent credentials as administrator of the Bonneville Power Authority. In Arthur Hauspurg, he hired a second in command with equally admired previous service at the American Electric Power Service Corporation. The pair have manifestly failed to convert Con Ed into the excellent utility that the city desperately needs as one of the prerequisites for economic revival. That new management is called for is emphasized by the company outcry against performance standards and financial penalties. The reaction conveys lack of confidence in corporate renewal,

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almost as though a Calvinist God had predestined Con Ed to an eternity of inefficiency.

Major stockholders in any competitive industry would by now have substituted new management for old. The prospect of bankruptcy, like that of imminent execution, powerfully focuses the intellect. Up to now at least, stockholders in regulated monopolies have had no reason to grumble. Aside from skipping a single dividend Con Ed checks roll in, undisturbed by the poor performance of their property. So long as current ownership and regulatory patterns endure, the outlook is gloomy.

A better idea is available, a generalization of a suggestion uttered by Westchester County Executive Alfred DelBello. Mr. DelBello proposes to purchase for his county Con Ed's transmitting and distributing network and buy power not from Con Ed but from the New York Power Authority. Why not go the whole hog and translate the entire Con Ed system from private to public ownership and operation? The idea is far from startling. On the West Coast municipal utility operation is common. TVA dates back to the Roosevelt era.

Public ownership is admittedly no panacea. All the same, how could the public managers do worse than their private counterparts? If Con Ed has taught the public a lesson about just how badly the private sector can perform and opened a discussion of public alternatives, its instruction may well be the best service this utility has rendered the public in a long time. □

CAUGHT IN THE PURSE STRINGS

Academia Has Hocked Its Autonomy

MARY ELLEN LEARY

Bad enough for the quiet of academia that the Bakke case hangs over every university and college in the country, promising an avalanche of political controversy about admissions standards, whichever way the Supreme Court decides.

Bad enough for free-ranging scientific inquiry that concern over recombinant DNA has generated a host of local regulations to supplement national safety standards, and turned the public skeptical about the virtue of pure research. Bad enough for champions of academic freedom that legislators are evaluating public university teaching loads in terms of cost effectiveness, that the private consulting by faculty is being studied for conflict of interest, that the sanctity of tenure is being tested at one end by the flood of bright young people thirsting for teaching roles and at the other end by laws erasing mandatory retirement age, thereby limiting the openings, while the movement toward unionization of faculty edges onward.

Bad enough that political appointees are popping up on new state boards across the country, mandated under the Nixon administration to "coordinate" the federal grants funneled into higher education—a peeking over the shoulder by politicos which the University of Illinois, to name one notable example, finds all too intrusive. Bad indeed, at least in terms of work load, all the regulations, reports, record keeping, counting of minorities, counting of women, and hiring of more lawyers to keep abreast of state or federal requirements. Such is the administrative burden on America's academic world today, whether private or public. In unprecedented volume and gravity, troubles keep mounting between the academic world and that instrument of the public on which it is increasingly dependent, government. And now, on top of it all, comes sex.

The question of human sexuality has become a major challenge to academia, because the subject has been thrust into California law as the first explicitly mandated instructional field for which content, faculty, duration and other details promise to be imposed on schools of medicine, not by their own faculty but by a state board adhering to legislative edict.

Eight deans from all the schools of medicine in California signed a letter of protest last month which called this legislative intervention into their responsibility for the curriculum "an action without precedent in this century." They tagged the law a "destructive intrusion into the internal affairs of the medical schools and their parent universities," and expressed "profound concern," objecting to each specific requirement of a separate course, designation of faculty, length of teaching, educational materials to be used and the evaluation process. Most rules tagged onto financial support for higher education by state and federal agencies have had no more than indirect influences upon the academic task. The medical deans saw in this California law a direct thrust into the academic realm. Such regulations, frozen into law, would unbalance the delicate process of curriculum development and reduce innovation, the deans protested. But, so skittery is the relationship between schools of medicine and governments that they did not say, "Get out of our domain." Instead, they suggested meetings to work out a "mutually satisfactory" compromise.

Editorial protests have been stronger. The press has urged that the law be revoked. The *Los Angeles Times* scoffed at government officials indulging in course planning. Lawmakers may be justified in pushing new areas onto the attention of the universities, it said, but they should leave to the faculty details about what to teach. "If the state is prepared to regulate the details of curriculum in one area, it can and may do so in others," noted Dr. Clayton Rich, dean of Stanford University Medical School. "This [the required course] would estab-

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lish a precedent and possibly a trend that seriously threatens the quality of all the public and private universities in this state."

No one questions that human sexuality is a subject appropriate to a medical school curriculum. Indeed, all California medical schools treat it in some fashion, some more exhaustively than others; some in a single-focus class, others apportioning the subject among anatomy, gynecology, psychology and other existing courses. Nor did interest in this field come tagging after legislative hearings; the classes have been evolving in response to initiative from young faculty and students. But a year ago, quite unexpectedly, state law added "human sexuality" to the existing list of some thirty subjects in which medical students, to be licensed as doctors in California, must have had "adequate instruction." The addition would in itself have caused no outcry, but here for the first time the law has moved past the generalized "adequate instruction" norm and ordered the state's licensing agency (Board of Medical Quality Assurance) to study what is now taught about sex, and then recommend to the legislature what ought to be the content, length of training, proper teachers and ways to enforce the regulation. The board did so, and its first proposal was that every medical school set up an interdisciplinary faculty to teach the subject as a single course over at least thirty hours. Included were advice on what material the student would need and what his or her capability should be, having completed the course.

"Can you imagine the furor," asked Dr. Alan Goldfein, assistant dean of U.C. Medical School, San Francisco, "if similar legislation regulated the content of a political science course? We concur with the intent of the legislature and the division of licensing that physicians practicing in California ought to be competent in the area of human sexuality. . . . Our concern is not with the specific requirement but rather with the principle of legislative regulation of the curriculum."

"What's going on here?" asked the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "Where do Sacramento legislators find their authority to interfere with university faculties?"

Warily the licensing board is testing its next step, the appointment of task forces to study how, under such explicit direction, to move beyond the limits of "adequate instruction." "There is a lot of controversy" acknowledged Richard Dewalt, programming officer for the licensing agency. "Medical schools are contending we are infringing on their academic freedom, which I guess is true. But we see it as a licensing requirement only. . . . " Effective as of January 1, the law should shake down within the next few weeks either to compromise or conflict between the medical schools and state government.

However, the force of this skirmish reaches far outside California's borders, since only 19 percent of the state's licensed medical practitioners are schooled in its own universities. Presumably, then, what gets standardized as a "human sexuality" course required for a California license will have to be adopted by other major medical schools or be taken as a pre-license cram course. One clear result from the flap is a sharp increase in the teaching about sex in medical schools throughout the country.

Such nationwide atttention no doubt tickles Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, author of the human sexuality bill, whose pivotal role and pixie point of view on educational matters give him enormous leverage in the lower house of California's legislature to inject nontraditional concepts into professional schools and colleges. He delights in countering emphasis on tests and academic achievement with a cry for "caring" institutions animated by "sensitivity and commitment." Vasconcellos's views, minority pressures and the jolts handed out by often critical and tight-fisted Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr., have made the realm of academia mighty uncomfortable in California these recent days. But it isn't alone.

Whether human sexuality, "holistic" healing or "humanistic" medicine pops up as the current focal point for controversy over educational direction; whether it is admissions practices, testing formulas, scientific experiments on the threshold of life, or time cards the professors are asked to punch, the central issue buried within all such disputes is the delicate balance between academic freedom and governmental financial support. Where the financial bind is closest, the tensions are sharpest. This has meant the medical schools.

There was a long period, after universities multiplied in the United States a century ago, when academic freedom suffered few threats from governmental infringement. But since the 1950s, according to Prof. Edward Shils, in "Government and the University" (International Council on the Future of the University, Newsletter, Vol. III, No. 5, December 1976): "The universities of the United States have allowed themselves to be placed in a very vulnerable position. . . . They have become dependent on the federal government for funds to such an extent that they feel themselves constrained to respond to every programmatic proposal of the federal government in order to relieve their immediate financial embarrassment." It distorts the concept of a university's purpose, he warned, when the institution becomes a "service station" to the federal government, "performing services which do not even pay for their actual cost. . . ."

In the last decade, prompted by what seemed an emergency need to boost the supply of medical practitioners across the country, federal funds have mounted so rapidly in the support of research, student fees and faculty positions that medical schools now are simply bewildered over where to draw lines that will define their academic autonomy. Like virginity, once lost it cannot be reclaimed.

While growing reliance on federal funding was a major reason why medical schools became pressure points for political intervention, other considerations also sensitized lawmakers in Washington and in state capitals more to medical school policies than to those in other areas. Fast-rising medical costs boosted medical education costs. This drew public attention. Legislators and Congressmen found that health-care questions provoked the largest proportion of constituent complaints.

Now the approach of a Congressional debate over a national health-care program of awesome cost dimensions sharpens concern of the Department of Health,

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Education and Welfare over accountability for public money currently flowing into all academic research. In the past two years auditing of all universities by HEW has taken a far stricter turn and some key business officers in the universities concede that the imposition of better business practice is wise.

Despite the sensationalism as disputes emerge over how research funds were used—and some real scandals are being dredged up—both government and the universities recognize that a significant change is taking place in their relationship. Findings by government auditors are often embarrassing when published, their implications exaggerated because the standards have grown stricter. But some records disclose that in many schools academic freedom was a cover for unusual fiscal laxity.

The touchiest problem right now is drawing the line between research hours and teaching hours. University administrators insist that punch-clock record keeping, which the auditors expect of business, erodes the freedom essential for study, research and thought. When research is federally funded but teaching is not, the historic intermingling of the two responsibilities comes under fire.

As pressures for accountability grow, many within the university world agree with Dr. Alfred Sumberg, director of governmental relations for the American Association of University Professors, that taxpayers not only deserve the right to know their money is being used for the ostensible purpose for which it was granted; but that universities should take the initiative in responsible public accounting.

"This has been a long-developing conflict," he said. "I feel the intrusion into academic autonomy is not as serious as many claim. Within a highly regulated society, the academic world in this country still has a large degree of the independence it needs. The question arises over what is peripheral and acceptable regulation and what really hampers the free learning process. There are many gray areas. A seemingly innocuous regulation can have unanticipated influences on academic freedom. To fend off outside decision making, universities will have to become far stricter in self-regulation."

Philip B. Kurland, University of Chicago law professor, would not entirely agree. He has likened the relationship between universities and government to Faust's pact with the devil. "An academy," he wrote in the university's Fall 1977 *Law School Record*, "that has sold its will—over the selection of faculty and students, over its curriculum and research—to the government is no longer an academy." The current everyday pressures upon a university or college, whether private or public, to conform to governmental regulation gnaw away at the climate Mr. Justice Frankfurter described as essential to academic freedom. He wrote (*Sweezy* v. *New Hampshire*, 354, U.S., 234, 263, 1957): "It is the business of a university to provide that atmosphere which is most conducive to speculation, experiment and creation. It is an atmosphere in which prevail the 'four essential freedoms' of a university—to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study."

There is a lot to be said for those championing the various constraints on academia. One by one, each may represent a just cause—a widening of entry, a quickening of response to social needs, a push toward democratization and away from elitism, a respectable demand for efficiency, a reasonable restraint imposed by donor upon recipient. But in the aggregate these separate strictures are reshaping America's concept of academic freedom. The import of such change needs far more public discussion than it is getting.

Few see malevolent forces at work. Pressures for change are not motivated by the political anger of the 1960s. In fact, Ira M. Heyman, vice chancellor of the University of California (Berkeley), has noted that the intellectual vigor, purposefulness and sense of responsibility for conducting the state's business evident among many of the young, intelligent legislators in California and their professional aides, their familiarity with the university they have so recently left, and their sense of sharing in its continuing life through their own recent experience blur the line between appropriate university integrity and governmental intrusion. The students who became campus sit-ins a decade ago to effect changes in the structure find it appropriate, now that they are young professionals in politics, to seek further change through political means. They are blind to the implications of their new, quite different role. If political do's and don'ts trouble the far-flung University of California, which has one of the clearest constitutional charters for independence from legislative meddling enjoyed by any state agency of higher education in the nation, then how much must the pressure be on more vulnerable schools? The answer is suggested by a proposal offered in the Maryland legislature: a plan to create in the Governor's office a commission to review and revoke university grades which flunked students. It was not enacted but it shows how far some legislators are willing to go.

The pressures are not likely to diminish; more, not fewer, breaches are to be expected in academic ivory towers. In a recent campus address, Senator Kennedy (D., Mass.) joked that Congress has become a "disease of the month" club, one ailment after another provoking debate, study and an outpouring of public funds. He conceded that some better system was needed to regulate competition for public research money, but warned that Congress will not relax its efforts to influence the education policies of the health professionals. "The constructive tension between Congress and the nation's medical schools will continue." He sees public furor over recombinant DNA as a forerunner of more extensive debates between scientists and society. "For the first time the principles of public accountability are being applied to the nation's science policy. . . ." And he added: "This new concept of public participation in science policy has unsettled many members of the scientific community. They see it as a threat to the freedom of scientific inquiry or as the forerunner of government controls over science. But the truth is the opposite. The greatest potential threat to science is the *lack* of

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public understanding and public participation." (Kennedy's emphasis.)

If that is how it looks at the government end, academics also anticipate more intervention. Robert Rosenzweig, vice president for public affairs at Stanford University, warned in a report this winter that the present influence of the federal government on medical centers, even in private universities, "is just a foreshadowing of much deeper and more pervasive controls to come." And he went on: "It is unlikely that such developments in one part of the institution can occur without affecting the rest. If Congress sees fit to pass laws to override institutional admission standards in the medical school, it can do so elsewhere."

The instance of Congressional intervention to which he refers is the most significant illustration to date of how far government will go in intruding upon academic authority. The case is small in the number of people involved, small in relative dollar impact, small in the list of institutions immediately affected. But it ballooned this past year into a test of academic freedom that is critical to all teaching institutions. The one-year compromise which eased the conflict has merely postponed until later this year a full-scale Congress versus university confrontation concerning how far government may go in establishing ground rules for the academic world when it doles out dollars.

The crisis involves U.S. citizen students who have gone abroad to study medicine because they could not get acceptance in U.S. medical schools. These number somewhere around 7,000. They study largely in Italian, Dominican Republic or Mexican universities, the greatest number, about 3,000, being congregated at Guadalajara, Mexico. They must be recognized as a dogged breed for they or their families have to pay their way; they study in an alien and often lonely environment, and they must master a foreign language before they can comprehend class work. They come, for the most part, from middle-class families and they have a tenacious desire to be physicians.

Their failure to be accepted by U.S. schools is not necessarily discrediting, for the competition to get into medical schools is so high that at some of them 90 percent of the applicants are rejected, many of them potentially fine doctors. It is everywhere conceded that the United States lacks enough medical schools to supply its needs. Indeed, so short is the supply that about 20 percent of doctors practicing here are graduates of medical schools abroad, according to the Sun Valley Forum on National Health, which in 1975 made a special study of the foreign medical graduate. In 1973, it found, 12,000 foreign medical graduates (the bulk of them, of course, also foreign-born) were admitted to the United States, while the total of U.S. medical school graduates that year was 10,000. Since then there has been a relaxation of immigration laws, partly because of public concern over physician shortage. These entries, clutching diplomas from foreign universities, must go through residency training here and pass licensing examinations before setting up practice, but so must the U.S. citizen who returns from his four-year professional schooling on foreign soil.

There are many problems attendant upon the whole range of foreign medical graduates. Some are numbered among the most brilliant physicians and research scientists in the country; but in disproportionate numbers they fill low-paid public hospital jobs. The story at hand, however, concerns only that small segment who are U.S. citizens.

Since the end of World War II federal funds have steadily grown for medical research, and the professional schools, eager for the money and the academic prestige of the research, sometimes found themselves excessively dependent upon this resource to keep the regular faculty going. When federal funds expanded further to enlarge the pool of medical teachers by underwriting the cost through "training grants," this dependence deepened, though some universities kept a wary eye over finances lest their tenured staff depend on what could only be considered temporary funds. Then, just as public awareness of the physician shortage grew liveliest, several medical schools found themselves teetering on the brink of financial collapse. Some specialty schools closed. In this atmosphere, Congress came again to the help of medical institutions with "capitation" grants—an award originally of about $1,500 per student—if the schools would increase their enrollments by 10 percent. First funded in 1971, this "capitation" program brought a significant amount of money to the nation's 108 medical schools. These appropriations have diminished since, to a current total of $84 million, but they are still critical to the existence of some schools and important to all.

Among citizens eyeing Congressional moves to enlarge medical school admissions, none were better informed than a small, highly motivated and remarkably intelligent group: the parents of U.S. students studying medicine abroad. While some activists were calling upon Congress to force the flow of physicians into a better geographical spread, others asking more service for the poor, and still others urging that general practitioners be emphasized over specialists, the parents of foreign students wanted just one thing—to bring their sons and daughters home through the increased enrollments. They ran what one university administrator called, in awe, the most sophisticated single-shot lobbying activity he had ever observed.

In 1976 an amendment to the Public Health Service Act, which included the "capitation" grants, was inserted in a late-hour conference committee session. It declared that U.S. students who had completed two years of study in a foreign medical school and could pass the first phase of the National Board of Medical Examiners test would be admitted to U.S. medical schools. The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare would allocate them to the universities as he or she saw fit.

This was the most direct federal usurpation of a professional school's control of its admissions practices ever attempted in this country. The "Guadalajara clause" became a dramatic rallying point for the cause of academic integrity. It drew little public attention, but it stirred the entire academic world with a sudden recognition of how far universities, and especially medical schools, have succumbed to the mixture of money and regulation. Mid-

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way through the year fourteen of the most prestigious schools, including Yale, Harvard, Duke, Johns Hopkins and Stanford, served notice that they would forefeit the capitation money rather than tolerate a government agency pre-empting their control over admissions. Some other schools, including the University of California, took the same position but stayed out of sight during the fight. There was an extra painful barb to the amendment—students at universities which did not accept this program would be ineligible for federally insured loans. Whatever medical schools stood to lose, about 40 percent of medical students have of late been leaning on federal loans. Small wonder some university administrators referred to the plan as "blackmail."

They got it rescinded. On December 8 Presidents Terry Sanford of Duke University, Derek Bok of Harvard, Steven Muller of Johns Hopkins, Hanna Gray of Yale and Richard W. Lyman of Stanford issued a joint statement applauding Congress for "decisively restoring our autonomy in the university admissions process." Academic freedom scored a victory. "Congress no longer dictates what students shall be admitted" they said.

But they came out with a compromise, of course. Medical schools will get "capitation" funds by increasing third-year enrollments by 5 percent and committing themselves to make a "good faith" effort to place in that extra percentage the U.S. students from foreign schools, or students from other graduate programs which they find acceptable within their own admissions criteria. If they cannot find students who measure up, the Secretary of HEW can waive the additional enrollments. By this out, institutional pride has been saved, and the government can advance its own hope of removing the embarrassment of citizens being forced to seek schooling outside the country's borders.

The colleges are relaxing a bit now, comforted that they rolled back a gross governmental intrusion. However, federal policy on giving "capitation" grants to medical schools is up for wholesale review by Congress this year and the 1977 gesture of independence by which those fourteen schools so bravely spurned the money to protect the principle may come back to haunt the academic world. Their stance suggested that they no longer need Uncle Sam, whereas the truth is that, with the high cost of medical training, they can't get along without him. Universities are increasingly hedged in by public money and by stricter governmental oversight. But they are also increasingly vulnerable to the expectations of special interest groups who can get acceptance of their views from Congress.

It is symptomatic of the times that in the largest U.S. university, the University of California, regents are getting ready to battle for their independence from state government. The regents have protested that budget language made newly specific this year in its legislative mandate amounts to "an unconstitutional infringement on the full powers of government" which the public vote has accorded them. It has ordered up a special study of the constitutional status of the university and U.C. President David S. Saxon has set a faculty group at work to draw up a policy guide by which future legislative moves can be measured. "Such problems [between legislators and university] are not new," said President Saxon, "but they are appearing with more frequency and in a greater variety of form than in the past. We need to give this matter systematic attention." It had better be soon. □

AT MOSCOW'S BOOK FAIR

VISITORS TO THE JEWISH BOOTH

JOSEPH S. DREW

Miracle. After fifty years of banishment, an entry visa to Russia finally came for authentic Jewish culture. The Association of Jewish Book Publishers was invited to join publishers from around the world for the First International Book Fair, "Books for Peace and Progress," held in Moscow from September 6 to 14. How come? Was it because the fair partially fulfilled the Helsinki Agreement, or was it to give the Soviets a chance to show the world that Jewish books are not anathema in Russia?

Most of the leading American newspapers, and a raft of outstanding columnists and prominent publishers, were calling for a boycott of the fair. *The New York Times* led off its editorial against participation with the headline, "Selling Out at Moscow's Book Fair." The Americans who attended this "parody of international communication" would be "selling not just their books but their prestige to the tormentors of Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov and so many others." And, when publishers wrote back in an avalanche of protest against the *Times*'s stand, the editors lashed out even more fiercely, noting that if there would be little censorship, as the Americans predicted, that "will be primarily because American publishers looking for new markets will abundantly censor themselves before they pack. And we find that demeaning."

For those interested in Jewish culture, however, the story was different. Profits were not the issue. For us, there was a chance that the iron curtain which Stalin had rung down on Jewish life might be briefly lifted. A booth crammed full of Jewish books might well bring hope to thousands of Soviet Jews.

When the October Revolution broke out in 1917, Jews were highly placed in the new government. Under the

Joseph Drew, a sociologist, first visited the Soviet Union as an educational policy fellow with the United States Congress in 1968.

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aegis of the commissariat for Jewish National Affairs and the Jewish section of the Communist Party, an extensive network of cultural institutions emerged. Yiddish was declared an official language. From 300 to 400 Yiddish language books were turned out annually. A Jewish autonomous region was created. Seminaries and pedagogical institutes were popular, a complete educational system arose, and Yiddish theatre performed across Russia. The aim was to be "Jewish in form, Socialist in content."

With the black clouds of World War II forming in the late 1930s, the policy changed. After V-E Day, it worsened. All the cultural institutions closed. Most of the leaders were murdered or sent to Siberia. Briefly, hope sprouted after Khrushchev's denunciation of the "cult of personality," but it was short-lived. In spite of the fact that 400,000 Soviet citizens recently declared Yiddish to be their mother tongue, from 1959 through 1970 only twenty-two books in Yiddish came off the presses.

Today but one Yiddish language newspaper survives; it comes from Siberia, circulates at about 1,000 copies, and is practically unseen in Moscow. There is one Yiddish magazine, a literary review called *Sovietish Heimland*, and half of its 16,000 copies are mailed abroad. Synagogues have declined in number, from 450 in 1956 to about sixty today. Jewish religious books are not widely available.

Our small delegation departed on September 3 for its mission to Moscow. I was carrying our book lists, B'nai B'rith catalogues and extra book copies. My materials, packed in New York, traveled in an inordinately large "Pampers" carton. Three of us were flying together, and I hoped the guards would let us through with no difficulty. My companions got by without even a cursory inspection but I, with my "Pampers," was less fortunate. The customs officer was tough; young and tall, wearing glasses but no tie, rigid and impassionate—the epitome of the officious official. But the moment he caught sight of that pile of Jewish literature, he became agitated. Soon, a team of six men was buzzing around my box, pulling it apart, scattering the books and holding a conference on what to do next. They issued several orders at the same time, telling me to stand over here, sit over there, explain this, explain that, keep quiet, and so on.

When I took out a notebook to record which books they were putting aside, one of the men snarled, "Don't write! You can't take notes here! It is not allowed at customs!" He snatched my book away. I never got it back. Soon the word came down. I was an official delegate and was to be let through with my packages. Lugging the now disheveled mess to a cab, I went to the hotel, full of apprehension about the fair next day.

The subway trip from downtown was fast and direct, depositing travelers at the fairgrounds, a series of monstrous structures built by Stalin. Gigantic statues and big parks with impressive fountains, hortatory posters and piped-in music abound in Moscow, and the Exhibition of Economic Achievements is no exception.

One building was reserved primarily for the "Socialist" countries. Showy displays from the USSR and the Eastern bloc countries were housed in this cavernous structure. Many Arab countries were set up in the same pavilion. During the first few days of the fair, the Iraqi booth was distributing lurid anti-Israel propaganda. Later, for whatever reason, the stuff vanished. Another "attraction" was the large Hare Krishna sign stretched across a booth, dead in the middle of the pavilion. Socialist? We were assigned to the "capitalist" pavilion, along with Israeli, British, German, Dutch and other Western publishers.

Our biggest problem was to pass censorship on the first day. The censors, two women, leafed through the books, putting some of them on the "kosher" pile and some on the "*tref*." They didn't like Moshe Dayan's *Diary of the Sinai Campaign*, perhaps because of General Dayan's big picture on the cover. A discussion ensued over *A Nation of Immigrants*, by John F. Kennedy. Maybe they were disturbed by the title, not liking the ideas it might put into the heads of our visitors.

The women discovered that they needed an expert in Hebrew and Yiddish, since these two languages were found in some of our materials. They went away and came back a few minutes later, accompanied by a slim, poorly dressed man in his late 50s. He took to the job with a vengeance, casting far more books on the "*tref*" pile than the women had chosen to reject. Soon, these "bad" books made up an imposing pile.

The three again disappeared, this time returning with a fourth censor, a tall, good-looking, well-dressed, slightly smiling man, who briefly investigated their preliminary rejections. The older censor put in his comments, apparently unsolicited, and in less than three minutes all 360 of our books were O.K.'d for display. A member of our delegation had resisted taking some of them along, fearing that we might sacrifice the whole business because of just a few "controversial" books.

As we started to display our books, a young man appeared from the upstairs office. He asked for the catalogues from one of our publishers, as well as a book on Sunday school education. We never saw the books again. Nor was the book by Dayan, which disappeared overnight before the fair officially opened, ever retrieved.

The Moscow Book Exhibition rules divided visitors to the fair into two groups—the experts and the others. First came the experts. The official reason for holding this show, whose opening night had been toasted by U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, was to enable the government experts to view books offered for sale and take notes on those the USSR might want to order. In the Soviet Union people can get hold of books from foreign sources only through the government. The fair was open for the officials from 9 A.M. until 2 P.M.

At 2 P.M., the exhibition was thrown open to the general public, and hordes of people suddenly descended upon the pavilion. Many headed straight for our booth. This was heartwarming, especially because Russian television, while pumping out information about the fair, was not informing people of our presence. In fact, many people told us that, although they had heard about the fair on radio or television, they had been unaware that any but "Socialist" books were on display.

For ten days, the story was the same. People came over to us, told us something about their lives, asked

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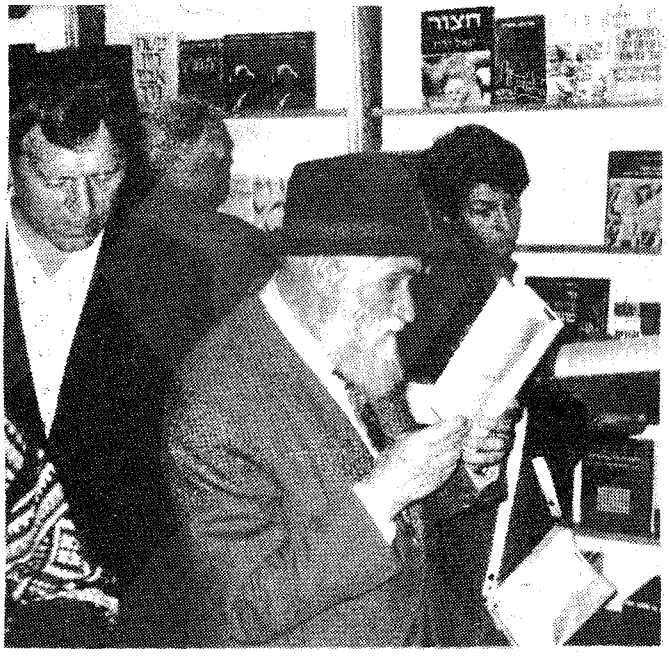

Visitors at the Jewish Book Publishers' Booth

us probing questions about Jewish life and Jewish culture in America and the West, and stayed for long periods to read through our books. Many times I wished that we had been able to rent a space ten times larger than we had.

The endless litany was:

"A book, please, any book on any Jewish subject."

"I don't care about the title. Please, give me anything. I'll pay any price for it."

"Please, Joseph, let me take this book. David promised me this morning I could have it."

"Please, sir, give me a book so that I can teach my daughter about what it means to be Jewish."

"Please, let me take a book on Israel. I promise I will pass the book on to someone else."

"They don't allow us to read anything. There are more books here on Jewish subjects than I have ever seen in my whole life."

One of the first visitors was an old Jewish man who sat down in front of a large-sized Hebrew prayer book, especially prepared for the elderly and visually handicapped, and pronounced the strange letters aloud. He looked up at us and said, "It's the *S'hma*" (the holiest of Jewish prayers). Slowly, he walked away, tears in his eyes.

Another early visitor was a prominent "refusenik." This brilliant young man had been waiting for many years, without work, hoping for his exit visa. During this period he had been studying Jewish religion and culture intensively, and he is especially knowledgeable on the current Jewish situation in Russia. He kept repeating that he was touched by seeing all these Jewish books at one time. "It's too much to be absorbed. I simply can't believe it."

A woman in her early 30s came by one day. "My Russian name is Tatiana; my Jewish name is Dafna. You can call me Dafna when no one else is around, please." Then, she added, "Please. I learned all about the Bible and the Talmud from my grandfather. He's Jewish. I want to learn more. Please let me borrow a Jewish book, something on religion. I'll read it and return it to you tomorrow."

One morning a young man wanted to ask me a question. He spoke only Russian. I asked him to talk to the official interpreter and she would translate for me. She asked him what he wanted to say. "No. I won't speak to you. I want only to speak to a human being," he said, walking away.

Under the sign of the Jewish Book Publishers we could be approached as Jews by Russian Jews—a rare experience in "easy recognition."

On Rosh Hashana we went to the synagogue. Mostly, people stood outside. Even though the weather was bad, at least 1,000 were there, standing, talking, singing and dancing until a van was driven through the crowd about 11 o'clock. My clothes identified me as a foreigner, and people came up with dozens of messages, especially greetings to relatives in the United States. It was clear that Jewish organizations which concentrate only on the well-known "refusenik" group, while doing a good deed, are missing the possibility of reaching many more among the nearly 3 million Soviet Jews.

Waiting for me outside the synagogue was a chubby adolescent girl. She asked me to say hello to her cousin in St. Louis. I said I would do so with pleasure. She broke into tears. "*Mazel tov*," she said, meaning "thank you" and not "good luck." But that was all the Hebrew she knew.

Our delegation had been forced to decide: would we close the booth for Sabbath? Would we shut down on Rosh Hashana? The solution was that the orthodox members of the group would go to services, while I, a Reform Jew, would pray on the eve of the holidays and keep the booth open during the day. This worked out well, since we were flooded with people on the weekends. The question of most importance to us was how to respond to the would-be borrowers. The rules of the fair absolutely forbade distribution of the books. And we were aware that official eyes were constantly monitoring our booth.

From the moment we opened our exhibit we noticed that our book stock was steadily diminishing. According to Western press accounts, police stopped some of our callers and confiscated their books. What became of such materials we never found out. We were approached by the fair's police and asked to sign a statement acknowledging receipt for some Hebrew lesson books that had been "recovered" by them. We refused to sign the paper. The translation for this interaction was conducted by an apparent "thief" caught by the police. By the end of the fair, few of our books were still on the shelves.

The most popular item on display in our booth was not a book, however. It was a decorated religious calendar we had hung on the side of the shelves as an afterthought. The requests for this calendar were unabating. The reason for the calendar's appeal was obvious; many visitors showed surprise upon learning that the most sacred days of the Jewish year, from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur, were being observed at that very minute.

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As time passed, it became impossible to converse with everyone who made it through the increasingly rude and restrictive police lines and wanted to talk to us. One elderly lady, shaking with palsy, was particularly bothersome. It was frustrating to talk to her with dozens of people crowding into the small space. Yet she persisted, talking, inquiring, and interjecting her point of view again and again as she read our books. Then someone told us that this poor woman had been sent to Siberian labor camps during the Stalinist crackdown on Jewish leaders; she languished there for fifteen years. We listened to her more sympathetically.

Moscow's Jews were generally interested in finding out all they could about Jewry in the outside world. What were our lives like? What could they do to develop ties with us? How would they manage if they came West? What did we think about Israel? Had we ever been to Israel?

One young man asked me many questions about Israel. An American girl had told him during Rosh Hashana that Israel is a racist society. He asked me, "You are a sociologist? This is all we ever hear about Israel. Tell me the truth. What is the real story?"

Most of our visitors were either under 30 or more than 60; the middle-aged seemed to avoid us. Also, some people tended to stay away until ten or fifteen others were standing, reading and talking in our booth. Then we would be overrun with visitors who refused to leave. They asked questions, and they read voraciously. Couples would stand there, reading entire books in English, making sure they understood what was being written. The people generally begged us to take their stories back to America, to appeal to world Jewry for assistance.

What did they fear the most? Most said they knew that the danger of being seen with us was official harassment. "The worst that will happen to me is that I will be expelled from the institute," said one young man.

"Maybe they'll expel you from the country," I said.

"That would be great," he replied, "but they'll never do it. They'll just not allow me to have a career here."

One prominent dissident I interviewed complained about American Jews who visit Russia. "Most of them are so afraid that they don't really help us," he said. "I wish they were a little braver. After all, we are the only ones in danger. We need them to reach out to us."

Not everybody seemed to be our friend. Tankred Golempolsky, a Moscow Radio reporter, was well informed on some of the worst miscarriages of justice in American history. He used these atrocities to his advantage, implying that our entire system is corrupt and prejudiced. His hostility was most manifest when describing the young men visiting our booth. "I know those 'good' boys. I've heard all their arguments. They are like feces which must be expelled from our body before they smell us all up," he sputtered.

I wanted to meet Aron Vergelis, editor of the Yiddish magazine, *Sovietish Heimland*. Mr. Vergelis is and has always been a controversial figure. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* describes him as someone who "has never deviated in the slightest from the often changing Communist Party line," and adds that allegedly "during the Stalinist period [he] informed on other Yiddish writers."

We met several times, at his dank office in the heart of Moscow and at the fair. My questions to him were pointed, asking what he thought about the smashing of the December 1976 Jewish Cultural Symposium; about the inability of Jews to obtain a Jewish education, and about the wide distribution of anti-Semitic books. I also questioned him about *Secret and Open Things*, the current movie which opens with a black screen, a bullet screech and a narrator spitting out, "This is how Jewess Fanya Kaplan attempted to assassinate Lenin." How did he account for the murder of the twenty-five prominent Jewish writers and cultural figures in 1952 or for the detention in Siberia of hundreds upon hundreds of writers, poets, actors, painters and musicians? Why were the state Yiddish theatre and virtually all the Yiddish organs of communication and institutions of education destroyed? How could he explain the fact that, although 300 to 400 books in Yiddish were published annually during the 1920s, now only two or three come out, all in minuscule editions, while Eskimo tribes with far fewer people have hundreds of books printed in their languages? What is the purpose of eliminating synagogues, harassing those who would learn Hebrew, and deleting mention of Jews from Soviet history texts?

It was clear from the responses why Mr. Vergelis has become the leading spokesman for the official Soviet position on questions of Jewish culture in the USSR. Through later research I found that many of his answers were either half-truths or completely untrue; some were clearly designed to deceive. Yet every answer was well-fashioned, testifying to his ability to parry my thrusts.

He admitted that the Moscow Jewish Cultural Symposium was suppressed. However, he claimed to have met the sponsors of that gathering, and to have found them amateurs in the field of Jewish culture, concerned only with embarrassing the Soviet Government. Police harassment was based on a "duty to prevent disorder in the streets." I asked him if, although he opposed this type of unofficial seminar, he would be willing to sponsor an official symposium on Jewish culture in Russia. He was planning to do just that, he said.

Denying any knowledge of the specific and widely known anti-Semitic books and films I mentioned, he agreed that many Soviet writers turn out books with "mistakes" in them. He, himself, had argued against such authors in his magazine. Why, I asked, did he not write an article for either his own magazine or for other publications in the Russian language, so that many more people might realize the pernicious nature of such "mistakes"? He said, "I am too busy."

In his opinion there has been a steep decline of interest in Yiddish among Soviet Jewry. That explains the absence today of the vigorous network of publishing houses, newspapers, schools, theatres and other cultural institutions such as existed by the thousands in the 1920s. He maintained that relatively few Jews are interested in education for their children in either the Yiddish or Hebrew language.

When I pointed out that upward of 400,000 Jews in the Soviet Union listed Yiddish as their mother tongue

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on the last census and that, under Soviet law, if as few as ten families ask for a school, it must be established, he replied that in the entire country one couldn't find ten families living in geographic proximity. "The Jews are scattered across the land." I told him that thousands of Jewish families live in Moscow alone and that many more than ten had indicated during my stay in their city that they would do anything to give their children a Jewish education, whether Yiddish or Hebrew. He congratulated me on my sociological research skills.

On the other hand, Mr. Vergelis expressed sympathy for the martyred Jewish cultural leadership. He pointed with pride to the busts of these people and other memorabilia that adorn his office. He added that in tribute to their talents he even publishes articles and poems by them, in effect attacking the policy of the Stalinist regime.

My meeting with Mr. Vergelis ended with a surprising suggestion. He would be willing to exchange articles, visits and—most important—books. He agreed to inspect American-published Bibles, in Yiddish and Russian, for purchase and distribution in Russia. He offered to print reviews of the books we had brought over. Most important, also, he proposed that he coordinate the exchange of American Jewish literature with Soviet Jewish literature. In essence, he talked about the opening we may long have hoped for.

From his remarks I inferred that all these proposals have been cleared with higher officials of the state and party. Also, informed scholars and journalists, both in the United States and in the USSR, agree that Mr. Vergelis does not speak on his own. Many of them have told me that, since these suggestions come from Mr. Vergelis, there is a good chance that the Soviets will be receptive to overtures from American experts in Jewish culture. Admittedly, there are many hurdles to overcome, but there can be no doubt that, should we succeed, a ray of authentic Jewish culture might penetrate the USSR once again.

I hope that for the 1979 Moscow fair American publishers will be ready with a much larger exhibit of Jewish books. □

THE RIGHT TO MAKE WAVES

Free Press in the High Schools

MIKE WIENER

California has become the first state officially to recognize that, under the First Amendment, the principle of freedom of the press applies to student journalists. As of this January 1, the State Education Code allows editors of official student newspapers to determine what they will print, without fear of arbitrary censorship. The only types of articles not permitted are those which are libelous, obscene, or which would substantially disrupt the operation of the school if they were printed.

The courts have repeatedly held that college papers enjoy the same constitutional rights as does the regular press, but until now many secondary school newspapers in the nation have been denied the right to print controversial articles or to express any opinion critical of the school or of the administration. Mainly responsible for this situation were the principals, who had an interest in seeing that their houses of learning presented a positive image in the community, and who also feared that student editors might "make waves" that would be visible to the local Board of Education. However, principals were not the only people at fault. Journalism teachers, media people, politicians, judges and even students themselves contributed to a situation in which students learned about the Bill of Rights in their social studies classes, but were denied those rights across the hall in their journalism room.

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Until recently, the typical journalism teacher was the youngest member of the English Department (no one with greater seniority would take on the extra job of advising the newspaper), often lacked tenure, and was usually without any training in journalism. Reluctant to antagonize their bosses, such teachers discouraged in-depth journalism, critical editorials, or exposés. Nor did professional teacher organizations offer much support. The Journalism Education Association adopted an official free-press stand only in 1972, and the National Education Association has never taken a stand on the issue.

Members of the professional media, those zealous guardians of a free press, all too often looked the other way where students were concerned. In Los Angeles, the Freedom of Information Committee did not support a set of free-press guidelines put before the Board of Education in 1975 (it did so finally in 1977). The local NBC television station opposed these guidelines editorially, claiming that freedom of the press did not apply to students.

It is more understandable, if still unforgivable, that politicians would ignore the issue. Three years ago, only one California state legislator could be found to introduce a student free-press bill. As one lobbyist said, "Student rights is a very emotional issue with the public which no legislator wants to touch, because whatever he or she does usually loses votes back home."

Perhaps the largest share of blame lies with the students themselves. Until the 1960s, young people tended not to question the "rules of the game," however ridiculous and even illegal those rules may have been. So few

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students fought for their right of free expression that the Student Press Law Center, an organization in Washington, D.C. that follows all First Amendment cases throughout the nation, finds it difficult to come up with a single student free-press case before the late 1950s.

Even had students protested, it is doubtful that the courts would have backed them up. A more likely result of early litigation would have been a defeat such as befell Earl Wooster, a Fresno high school student in 1915. Expelled for criticizing his school's administration during a student assembly, he went to court, but was told that his "insubordination" represented a threat to school discipline and could not be tolerated. (*Wooster* v. *Sunderland*, 1915.)

A typical pre-1960 student newspaper—including that of my own senior high school in Brooklyn in 1950—was run by a clique of rah-rah, everything's-great kids who never thought of criticizing their school or its administration. They didn't complain when all copy had to be sent to the principal for approval; nor did they object when he or the journalism teacher blue-penciled words, paragraphs or entire articles without explanation.

Editors in those days accepted the "fact" that they were immature. They accepted the "fact" that their newspaper was a public relations instrument of the school and could print only positive news. They didn't dream of printing any article dealing even remotely with sex, narcotics, alcohol, crime or vandalism. They accepted the adviser's right to appoint and fire editors at will. Students who balked at any of the above conditions did not take journalism—with the result that many talented writers were, in effect, denied a chance to develop their skills while in secondary school. During the mid-1960s, however, many aspiring journalists dropped off the staffs of their official student newspapers, and began publishing their own unofficial (underground) newspapers.

The censorship was covert as well as overt. If a journalism teacher got "out of hand," if editors began to express their ideas too freely, the newspaper budget was cut, the teacher was removed as journalism adviser, beginning and advanced journalism classes were canceled or cut back, the classroom phone was taken away, the print shop suddenly discovered that it had other, higher priorities, and so on.

The first major breakthrough for student press freedom occurred in 1969, in a case not directly concerned with journalism. A group of Des Moines students were suspended for wearing black armbands to school during a so-called "Vietnam Memorial Day." In a 7-to-2 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court (*Tinker* v. *Des Moines*) said that students did not forfeit their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse gate; that students might express their views on any topic in school, provided they did not "materially and substantially" interfere with the operation of the school; and that it was up to the school administration to prove disruption before it could suspend students or prohibit their expression. In short, that "To justify prohibition . . . there must be something more than a mere desire to avoid discomfort and unpleasantness that accompanies an unpopular viewpoint."

In theory, *Tinker* gained free-press rights for school journalists. In practice, however, few school districts altered their rules to eliminate censorship. The Supreme Court decision, they argued, applied only to student expression *outside* a classroom. Since a student newspaper is produced *inside* a classroom, what goes on in such a class, they asserted, should be under the total control of school authorities. (It was also said that the school "owned" the paper, hence could control its contents, because in most cases it was supported at least in part by school funds. That argument has been used effectively in private schools, but public schools operate on public money, tax money, and there the Bill of Rights can be assumed to hold sway.)

The chain of events that led to California's free-press law for high schools began in April 1969, when two Campbell, Calif. students ran into trouble for distributing an underground newspaper on the campus of Del Mar High School. Administrators cited a provision of the State Education Code forbidding the spreading of "propaganda," and also a local school rule that the principal had to approve all stories before they were printed. Aided by their fathers, both ACLU attorneys, the boys went to Northern District Court, where a three-judge panel ruled both local and state laws unconstitutional. The school, said the court, could regulate time, place and manner of distribution, but could not prohibit it on the ground of the contents.

Under court order, the California legislature revised the Education Code so that the relevant section specifically allowed freedom of expression for all students, except for expression which was obscene, libelous or substantially disruptive. Nevertheless, nearly all California school districts refused to apply the revised law to official student newspapers, contending that, as with *Tinker*, it did not apply inside the classroom.

In early 1973, the Course of Study for Advanced Journalism, published by the Los Angeles City Schools, contained this statement under the heading, "Freedom of the Press": "The concept of freedom of the press does not apply to high school newspapers."

Puzzled by this statement, the Los Angeles Journalism Teachers Association (LAJTA) applied to the school board for a clarification, and was told that the Student Rights Handbook was being appropriately revised. The anxiously awaited revised edition did contain a section on student press freedoms—but it also contained the statement that the principal reserves the right to censor "when necessary." Since there was no definition as to when that might be, the principal retained a free hand to edit as he saw fit.

In November 1973, LAJTA representatives spoke before the school board, asking them to bring existing board rules in line with *Tinker*, *Campbell* and the updated section of the Education Code. Expressing only mild interest in the matter, the school board told the representatives to gather additional data and return at some undefined later date. But, unknown to them and to LAJTA, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter was in the audience and wrote up the presentation. Other media then picked up the story, and school newspaper censorship suddenly became big news in Southern California.

In the next six months, journalism teachers, attorneys, school board members, principals and student editors

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were frequently featured in newspaper and magazine articles, on radio and TV programs, and in public debates on the issue. Three long, stormy hearings were held before school board committees. In April 1974, a motion to grant First Amendment rights to student reporters was made and debated before the Board of Education. An overflow audience and a battery of television cameras and radio microphones covered the events. When the showdown came, conservatives on the board won, 5 to 2. It did change the language of its rules on student newspapers, but included a statement that the principal had the "ultimate decision" over student newspaper content.

Although the liberals had lost the battle, they had learned a lot. To begin with, their fact-gathering had shown that papers in 25 percent of the Los Angeles senior high schools and 40 percent of the junior highs had experienced overt censorship, and a significantly higher percentage had been curbed by covert censorship. The LAJTA compiled a long list of specific examples of items that had been blue-penciled, including the following:

¶ A junior high article containing the phrase "bosom buddies"; it was labeled obscene.

¶ A review of the movie *The Exorcist* using the word "masturbate"; 2,500 copies of the newspaper were destroyed and the issue was reprinted with the offending word replaced by "abused herself."

¶ A drawing showing a student smoking.

¶ An editorial calling for decriminalization of marijuana.

¶ An article criticizing a Bicentennial pageant being staged by the school board at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars.

Armed with a vast mailing list of interested individuals and organizations throughout the country, and having made a number of good friends in the media, LAJTA then turned to the state legislature. In December 1974, Sen. John Vasconcellos (San Jose) introduced AB207, which amended the Education Code section specifically to include official student newspapers. It breezed through the state Assembly, but when it came before the state Senate, one conservative made an emotional speech, charging that this bill, if passed, would open the door for students to proliferate four-letter words in their newspapers. The bill was defeated.

About this time, a Washington-based, blue-ribbon group of professional media people, under the banner of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial's Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism, had completed a nationwide series of hearings. Students, teachers, professional journalists and school administrators testified. The report, written up by Jack Nelson, a reporter in the Washington bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*, was published as a book, *Captive Voices: High School Journalism in America*.

Secondary school newspapers, the report said, were of generally low quality and relevance, and censorship, more than any other factor, was the cause. Principals were the main censors, it said, but added that such censorship was supported by school superintendents and boards of education. Many journalism teachers, it added, exercised such tight control that the title of editor was "meaningless." Parents were not only uninterested in student rights but usually supported rigid controls. And professional journalists usually were not aware of, or not concerned about, the problems of student reporters. The report found that only 35 percent of the professional editors it interviewed felt that students should enjoy First Amendment rights. *Captive Voices* stirred up a lot of people, and groups that had not been involved in the free-press events in California now began their own information-gathering, letter writing and lobbying.

In early 1976, Sen. Alan Robbins of Los Angeles reintroduced in the California legislature AB207, renamed SB2120. This time around, proponents were better organized, but once again, the bill was defeated. At this time, however, a school board election in Los Angeles placed a liberal-leaning majority in control, and the Los Angeles Journalism Teachers Association once again tried to have the local board rules changed. The community was now openly supportive. At a series of hearings, testimony was given by television and radio newsmen, journalism professors, attorneys, teachers and students. Support was sought, and received, from the area PTA. Passage of the "Guidelines for Official Student Newspapers: Board Rule 1275" was assured; the vote was 6 to 1. Los Angeles thus became the first large-city school system officially to grant First Amendment rights to student editors as part of its Board of Education rules.

Flushed with success, LAJTA decided to try a third time for a free-press law at the state level. Bill Lambert, the professional lobbyist of United Teachers, Los Angeles, the local teachers' union, guided the delicate day-to-day operations needed to get the law enacted. Backing was obtained from the California Association of School Boards, from the California Teachers Association and even from the Los Angeles Board of Education. Letters of support from all over the country appeared in the mail of key Senators and Assemblymen. Opposition was minimal (although a few conservatives almost succeeded in bottling the bill up in the Revenue and Taxation Committee after they had unbelievably attached an $800,000 appropriation to a free-press bill!). The bill passed, and SB357, as it was now called, became law on January 1.

What happened in California is only a beginning; strong opposition to student rights still exists throughout most of the country. Such organizations as the Journalism Education Association, the Student Press Law Center and the Newspaper Fund are spreading the word, however, and are urging local groups to go to the way of Los Angeles and California.

Movements are underway throughout the country to pass laws similar to those in California. Within five years or so, First Amendment rights should be much more common for student journalists.

However, the news is not all good. Three Southern California journalism teachers (none in Los Angeles, and none with tenure) are known to have been relieved of their duties in 1977 for allowing the printing of articles which "made waves." There is still a long way to go. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Life of the Party

A FINE OLD CONFLICT. *By Jessica Mitford. Alfred A. Knopf. 333 pp. $10.*

THE ROMANCE OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM. *By Vivian Gornick. Basic Books. 261 pp. $10.95.*

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN COMMUNIST: A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925-1975. *By Peggy Dennis. Lawrence Hill and Co. 302 pp. $5.95.*

RONALD RADOSH

The once familiar caricature of the villainous American Communist grows fainter. Whatever the realities and horrors of Stalinism, we now know that scores of honest and active militants devoted their lives to the party as a response to conditions within their own countries and in defense of what they believed to be the socialist ideal. Despite their rationalizations about Stalinism, we cannot dismiss an entire phase of historical development as simply "Stalinist." There were activities and programs engaged in by Communist Party members that were in the genuine tradition of Western working-class radicalism.

Acknowledging this does not make unabashed heroes of the Communists. What is required is a new look at the party's strengths and weaknesses, a reevaluation of its role in American politics. As many observers have noted, radicalism in America for decades meant the Communist Party, and our newly found ability to look at the Communists without using the stale categories of the cold war provides us with a rich opportunity to understand the Communist experience.

In this quest, the new crop of books written by former Communists who do not regret their years in the party are of immense help. These are people who maintain a commitment to socialist ideals, and who only left the party after concluding that to work in or through it would actually hinder their ability to reach Americans.

A great number of Americans may learn something about what it meant to be an American Communist from Jessica Mitford. Ms. Mitford has appeared on the *Today Show, The Dick Cavett Show,* and has the honor of being the only former Communist still on the Left to be praised and featured in the pages of *People* magazine. A headline-making ex-Communist of the 1970s who, when asked why she stayed in the party during the 1950s, answered: "I can hardly imagine living in America in those days and *not* being a member."

Ms. Mitford does give readers a lively and humorous look at what party life was like on the local level—raising money for the California branch, protesting the execution of Willie McGee in Mississippi, fighting against the victimization of a black family in Oakland, opposing the postwar inquisition carried out by HUAC.

She also admits a great deal. Anti-Communists used to refer to groups like the Civil Rights Congress as Communist "fronts." Ms. Mitford acknowledges that is precisely what they were, and she tells us the CRC was created in 1946 "at a meeting of Communist leaders and close party sympathizers." To the charges of the NAACP that the party was using issues to extend its influence among blacks for its own sinister purposes, she retorts that they only used "these issues to identify the economic and political roots of racial bigotry," and to show that "police terrorism in the black community was a deliberate, conscious policy of Oakland's political rulers." When the CRC and the party waged its isolated campaign to free Willie McGee, a black man framed in Mississippi, they were condemned for using the case to further the Communist cause by fomenting racial strife. Even a writer in *The Nation* blamed McGee's death on the party, whose support for his cause was a supposed kiss of death.

Her response is well taken. Liberals and the NAACP had never worked on the case when it was being fought in the courts, nor had they tried to mobilize liberal opinion to halt his execution. They did not acknowledge what she calls "the inconvenient truth: that had it not been for CRC and the Communists, the McGee case and the issues it raised would have gone unnoticed outside Mississippi." She is certainly on score here. But her observations on the CRC are strangely incomplete.

The CRC claimed to be working against incipient American fascism growing out of the cold war, yet Ms. Mitford is silent on the CRC's refusal to support non-Communist victims of that same cold war. When the legless Trotskyist war veteran, James Kutchar, sought the aid of the CRC after he had been fired as a government clerk and had lost his pension, C.P. members rammed through a resolution denying him aid at their national meeting. This position undercut the party's claim that it was working disinterestedly on behalf of civil rights for all cold-war victims and prevented the CRC from gaining broad support, not to mention creating trust in their leadership.

Many readers will turn to Jessica Mitford to learn about the continuing saga of the Mitford family, to read about her irreverent capers within and without party circles, or to read the full text of her famous (in Left-wing circles) spoof "Lifeitselfmanship, L or Non-L Usage," a biting satire on the party's sectarian mode of internal communication. Throughout, one gets the impression that life in the party was a lark. Ms. Mitford appears to have been the Warren Hinckle of the Old Left. And while her years in the party may have been entertaining to her, the other books indicate that for a good many of its members, the experience was something altogether different.

Vivian Gornick attempts to give her audience a rounded look at what the party experience meant to an entire generation. She provides a series of interviews with a diverse group of former Communists which she hopes will illuminate the strengths and perils of living a life based on passion. She wishes to show how real people experienced "the fierce emotional pull of that life, awesome, hungering, deeply moving." She does give us affecting, even haunting reminiscences: personal recollections "of the extraordinary political experience that their lives both embrace and illuminate." If she had actually carried out that task, her book might have had more value.

Instead, she pushes the interviews in the direction of her oft-stated thesis—that no movement in our recent past has spoken so compellingly to the need of human fraternity as communism, nor has any other movement induced "a

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commonly held dream of passionate proportion"; hence she seeks to uncover the "passion that converted [the Communists], passion that held them, passion that lifted them up and twisted them down." But despite a good deal of this purple prose, she does not accomplish the goal. Different interviews and stories fade together; finally the reader finds it difficult to distinguish one person's experiences from another. Her book is dedicated in part to Carl Marzini—whom she calls "the most perfectly integrated Communist I know"; a man with "a remarkable wholeness of being." But as they begin their interview—she calls him Eric Lanzetti in the book (pseudonyms are used throughout) —he tells her that her "thesis—the passion at the heart of the Communist experience—is anathema, smacking of reactionary frivolity." Would that Ms. Gornick had listened to Marzani.

Coming from the radical feminist movement whose members have argued that the personal *is* political, Ms. Gornick errs when she treats the Communists as if the same were true of them. The result is to treat a highly politicized movement in purely personal terms. To isolate the Communist Party from the issues and events with which its members grappled is akin to examining organized religion while ignoring theology and church history. In conclusion, Ms. Gornick asserts that because the Communists "gave themselves passionately, with a wholeness of being, to the most problematic of human struggles," she is honoring them: "It was the party that brought to astonishing life the kind of comradeship that makes swell in men and women the deepest sense of their own humaneness, allowing them to love themselves through the act of loving each other." This sort of sentimental emoting allows us to see only passion without politics, and the implication is that one can understand the party's decline as the effect of extreme passion on human beings, rather than as the result of mistaken policies and programs. The "glory and the agony" of the party was that its "journey toward the vision" was "brilliantly humanizing"; yet the dogma "at the end of the road . . . is soul-destroying." How does that figure?

Ms. Gornick never pauses to ask whether the humanizing journey had to end in dogma. To do that, of course, one would have to discuss the politics and line of the party—something the author views as irrelevant in a book devoted to passion alone. She is correct when she writes that to denounce a political reality by the word Stalinism is to deny the life behind the word; yet she omits the politics behind her subjects' experience; as if the politics of the party was simply window dressing for those seeking fraternity. Ms. Gornick believes she is honoring the Communists because they were more passionate than others—because "they feared, hungered and cared *more*." The argument is ludicrous. Were there not many others who were equally passionate on behalf of causes Ms. Gornick might detest? Does she honor the passion shown today by the Right to Life and anti-ERA opponents of the women's movement?

She reveals as new what others have argued for years: party membership offered psychic gratification and gave its members a sense of belonging in a hostile world; Marxism became canonical dogma; members felt they were part of the future of History. But while others have seen this as a grave weakness, Ms. Gornick sees it as ennobling —communism becomes an "awesome move toward human-ness." The tragedy to her is that for many Communists ideology was "vision evaporating into dogma."

To blend the personal and political in a manner that does allow us to glimpse the Communist life with full attention paid to the political issues is a difficult task. Peggy Dennis's book accomplishes this. Her memoir is one of the most revealing, fascinating and compelling accounts written by a Communist functionary close to the party's leadership. The widow of Eugene Dennis, the party's general secretary, Ms. Dennis combines a moving account of her personal life with a political analysis of the party's activities from the early 1930s to the present. Her book is full of revelations. The late Joseph Starobin, in his study *American Communism in Crisis, 1943-1957*, referred to Eugene Dennis as "the most authoritative party spokesman, yet the least known and the most enigmatic." Noting that his whereabouts had been a secret since his disappearance after being arrested in Los Angeles in 1930, Starobin wrote that "there is indirect evidence of his presence in Moscow as late as 1937."

Peggy Dennis confirms this, and tells us even more about the previously enigmatic figure. Not only was Eugene Dennis in Moscow as late as 1937, he functioned as a full-time Comintern agent, traveling to South Africa, China and the Philippines between 1931 and 1935, returning to Moscow in 1937-38, and once again in the spring of 1941. Students of the party are all aware that the American Communist Party took its cues and formulated its programs after giving full attention to the needs of Stalin's foreign policy. Ms. Dennis, who only left the party in June 1976, confirms that their reference point "was always the Russian Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution."

She now rejects those years of unquestioning belief—years in which she and others were motivated by a desire to defend the young Soviet republic caught in a state of siege. Ms. Dennis now provides us with fresh documentation about the extent to which party strategy, tactics, policies and even its American leadership were chosen and dictated by Stalin's henchmen in Moscow. In January 1938, she recalls, Earl Browder, William Z. Foster and she and her husband were in Moscow, to delineate their respective positions on the party's attitude toward the Roosevelt administration and the labor movement. "Out of the Moscow discussions," she writes, "came the decision that Gene return home at once . . . to become part of the national leadership in New York," to serve as a balance between "Browder's reformist tendencies and Foster's sectarian leanings."

Did she and her husband know about the Stalinist terror being unleashed around them as they lived in Moscow? She is unusually candid in her answer:

> We did not know at that time that the few public show trials of Old Bolsheviks were but the tip of the iceberg. We did not know that hundreds of thousands of Party and non-Party socialist cadre were being imprisoned and executed as political deviationists, spies, saboteurs. We did not know the extent of those purges, but we cannot claim we did not know what was happening. We knew that the Comintern had been decimated. We read of the public trials . . . puzzled and uncomprehending, but we read the accounts and we accepted them. We saw it as part of the brutal realities of making revolution, of building an oasis of socialism in a sea of enemies. We accepted the belief of infallibility of our leaders, the wisdom of our Party. Fact and claims to the contrary were rejected as the very proof of that anti-Sovietism that demanded the vigilance Stalin urged.

For the first time, readers are told the bizarre story of how the Dennis's son, Tim, brought with them to Moscow during their first stay, was forced to remain and grow up in Russia by the Comintern's leaders. Ready to leave Russia soon after the United States had recognized the Soviet Union, it was

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feared that Soviet-American relations would be jeopardized if the child's parents' whereabouts were made known at customs by the presence of a purely Russian-speaking 5-year-old. But although promises were made, Tim was not allowed to return to his parents or to the United States. Instead, he was groomed for Russian leadership, and returned with the Khrushchev entourage in 1960.

The second theme of the book is Peggy Dennis's nascent feminism, her rebellion against the role of secretary to the great male party leader and her subordination to him. She finally understood that human and male-female relationships "were more complicated than our party could admit"; that aside from economic issues affecting women, the party, "including its women activists, responded with built-in male rhetoric." Ms. Dennis reveals a feminist consciousness that militated against the narrow bounds of party ideology. She cites as her own primary influences her mother's feminism, the party's crude economic determinism, and an emotional commitment to her husband's job as full-time party chief; all of which led her to fight "that relationship but always within the limitation of the belief that his needs came first."

While Jessica Mitford was leading the life of the party within the party, Peggy Dennis was learning that although the party may have given a feeling of fraternity to its members, the term "comrade" meant little in reality. When her husband was imprisoned in the 1950s, not one Communist leader "opened his family circle to us or offered to play surrogate father for a weekend's afternoon to a child . . . They sent Gene's weekly pay envelope but they gave nothing of themselves."

For all her understanding of the party and its weaknesses Peggy Dennis writes her book as if she were still her late husband's Girl Friday. She does manage to give an affecting description of their reaction to the Khrushchev revelations. At first, she and her husband were shattered by the words they read from the Soviet chairman. She relates how she sat in the dark and wept, "for the years of silence in which we had buried doubts and questions. For a thirty-year life's commitment that lay shattered." Yet, the Dennises stayed with the party, trying to save it from those she describes as the revisionists of the Right led by John Gates, and the sectarians of the Left led by William Z. Foster.

Later on she rationalizes her husband's eventual failure to support the "re-examinationists" in the party's crucial 1957 debate and his failure to oppose the local Stalinists led by Foster by citing "his aversion to the pronounced anti-Sovietism that surfaced in the debate." (Those, for example, who opposed the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian rebellion.) Her explanation is unsatisfactory. Students of the American party will do better to heed Starobin's judgment of Dennis as a "centrist" leader who "recoiled before the logic of [his] own self-critique," and whose own rationale of the Khrushchev speech was reprinted in *Pravda* because of its own cautious and tentative tone.

Yet, Peggy Dennis was to learn that one person's anti-Sovietism is another's critical independence from Moscow. By 1968, she stood among those who condemned the Soviet invasion of Prague, and she ends her book by providing new details on how Gus Hall and the current party leadership led the party back into its familiar voice as Moscow's American current. It was only a matter of time before Eugene Dennis's widow would make the stand her husband hesitated to take twenty years earlier. For this, and for the light she sheds on the contributions of the Communists and the understanding she brings to the history of American communism, her book is essential reading. □

Housing Rundown

DECENT HOUSING: A Promise to Keep. *By Thomas Forrester Lord. Schenkman. 176 pp. $15.*

GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD: The Challenge of Open Housing. *By Morris Milgram. W.W. Norton & Co. 248 pp. $10.95.*

AMERICA'S HOUSING CHALLENGE: What It Is and How to Meet It. *By Roger Starr. Hill and Wang. 130 pp. $8.95.*

CHESTER HARTMAN

Given the magnitude and persistence of the country's housing problem, there are surprisingly few books written on it and, alas, almost none that are really good. The subject gets a lot of treatment in academic and trade journals, but these are usually technical and abstruse and for the most part treat only limited issues—technological changes, subsidy formulas, design.

In part this situation exists because the "housing field" encompasses so many diverse components. Its economics is affected by national economic policy and local markets, as well as the location of population, and industry and transportation linkages. Housing raises basic issues of race and class. It involves architects, lawyers, entrepreneurs, crafts-persons, code and zoning officials, realtors, materials manufacturers (of everything from cement, to refrigerators, to doorknobs). Federal, state and local government all play a—not necessarily compatible—role, as does the private sector. A myriad of ancient and evolving legal codes pertaining to property rights, taxation and regulation of economic activity affects all housing. Housing raises essential political and philosophical questions about the rights and obligations of government. The list could go on and on.

Whether "the housing problem" will always be with us or not is a matter of some debate. Certainly, more and more Americans are beset by housing problems—costs, not slums, are becoming the predominant concern. It's getting harder and harder for people with middle-range incomes and below to buy or rent a decent place to live without paying an excessive portion of their incomes, leaving them with too little for food, medical care, transportation and other necessities. As of 1975, more than 17 million U.S. households (out of a total of 73 million) were devoting more than 25 percent of their income (the standard yardstick of acceptable housing cost) to shelter while 9.5 million were paying 35 percent or more. And each year these figures rise. Furthermore, using a far more realistic yardstick—comparing the Bureau of Labor Statistics's standard minimum budget for non-shelter costs against actual income, and then seeing how much is available for housing—the number of households suffering from excessive shelter expenditures rises to 21 million, and is nearly half of all households earning under $15,000 a year.

All the conventional indicators—land speculation, slums and poor neighborhoods, rents and mortgage interest rates, rising property taxes and utility rates

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(which for many families now exceed mortgage payments)—rank housing in the front row of the country's social and economic problems.

Unfortunately the many academics who write about this problem tend to be somewhat removed from the real world of housing struggles. The few "practitioners" who write about it tend to be narrow and unimaginative. Two of the three books reviewed here fall within that second indictment. Thomas Lord, author of *Decent Housing: A Promise to Keep*, has been active in Houston as director of various housing development and management corporations. Sadly, what he has to say about Houston isn't all that interesting and the general lessons he draws from the Houston experience are pretty banal. The book runs cursorily through a history of federal housing legislation such as FHA, public housing and urban renewal, and deals a bit with local programs such as code enforcement, model cities and revenue sharing. All this is spruced up with lots of name-dropping, barely relevant details about Houston, and Lord's personal experiences. It also contains plenty of factual errors, and some very weak writing.

Against so untrustworthy a background, one approaches Lord's policy recommendations with justifiable reticence. His basic answer is to call for more federal funds in the form of mortgage interest subsidies and rent supplements to assist the private market, thus initiating "a new era of cooperation between the private sector, the administration, and Congress." The book ends without any analysis but in true Houstonian spirit: "If we can be first in space, first in military defense, first in international commerce, we can also be first in housing."

Morris Milgram is also an optimist. His particular panacea is racially integrated housing, accomplished through "affirmative marketing techniques." I want to pay due homage to Milgram. As a home builder and community developer, he has done admirable things. Since the 1950s he has pursued a single-minded goal of planning, building, buying, renovating housing where a stable balance of black and white families can live harmoniously. For the most part his many ventures, mainly in the Philadelphia region, have proven successful (although he has had his share of troubles as well, most notably in Deerfield Park, Ill., where Milgram's attempt to build an integrated development in that Chicago suburb was sabotaged by local code officials once they got wind of his plans). His book, *Good Neighborhood: The Challenge of Open Housing*, has some useful material, including case studies of racially integrated developments (which could profitably have been fewer and more detailed), and some lists of do's and dont's regarding zoning, sales conditions, timing of publicity about a proposed integrated development, where to advertise, etc. There are some interesting discussions of quotas vs. "affirmative marketing techniques." But these draw confusing conclusions, and never come to grips with the conflict between limiting nonwhite access in order to maintain racial balance and maximizing nonwhite access to scarce housing resources. One of the author's more annoying tendencies—true of many do-ers—is the frequent demonstration of his own importance.

My main problem with the book is that it's far too roseate. Milgram imagines that almost no one is really a bigot ("Probably only 5 or 6 percent of the population would vigorously resist integration and under no circumstances move into an interracial community.") He thinks architecture and amenities are primary among people's concern with housing and he seems to skirt the issue of social class, or at least he assumes enough homogeneity that class does not become a problem. One can only smile at the naiveté of someone who can say that "In the long run, there is simply no one who profits from segregation; we are all losers." It is one thing to do one's best to create a few thousand units of open, racially balanced communities under favorable conditions, but it is another to conclude from that experience that this is possible every place. Milgram's vision may be admirable, but his political and economic understanding of the world is wanting. Racism is a far deeper, more pernicious, more *profitable* aspect of our society than he will believe. A hard-headed analysis of the history of racism, and how it is sustained must be the starting point in working for the kind of society Morris Milgram desires.

Although I have profound political disagreements with Roger Starr, his book *America's Housing Challenge: What It Is and How to Meet It* has at least the merit of being thoughtful and well written. Starr was head of New York City's Housing and Development Administration under Mayor Lindsay, and is now on *The New York Times*'s editorial board. He is well known for his avid opposition to rent control, his advocacy of "triage"—the official abandonment and decanting of whole segments of cities, such as the South Bronx, in order to make them available for "renewal"—and his hard line on the tenants' rights movement and "problem tenants." These and other neo-conservative thoughts are sprinkled throughout the book, in asides and broadsides.

Like many conservatives of the Edward Banfield stripe, Starr is adept at poking holes in liberal mythology and programs. In the housing field, perhaps more than in any other area, "do-gooder" programs have brought about mixed results in removing slums and otherwise alleviating housing problems. Most notably, the public housing program—the oldest, biggest and most expensive effort we have made to provide for the housing needs of the poor—has hardly been a good advertisement for more government intervention. Our nation's housing policy—such as it is—has often had conflicting objectives. Starr is good at pointing out these weaknesses.

A central theme of Starr's approach to urban problems is the distinction between the "working" and "nonworking" poor (working class vs. *lumpen*). Like many of his conservative colleagues, Starr has written the latter off, and is determined to frame social policy toward the containment of what he regards as hopeless elements: "For the hard truth is that some people are incapable of meeting minimum standards of housekeeping or neighborly behavior. . . ." And in a more frightening version, which truly evokes possibilities of Buchenwald to me, he remarks, "In short, until society has found a way to make its members live within what might be called a code of tolerable urban behavior, large cities can provide a measure of safety for the majority of their residents only by including a semi-permanent slum within their boundaries."

Such thinking takes us well beyond the housing question, of course. Starr does put forth some specific and useful steps toward solving the housing problem: greater public ownership of low-income rental housing (or, as the Europeans term it, "social housing"); establishing powerful regional housing authorities and multiplying the number of housing agencies operating within a given area; rural community reconstruction programs; greater tenant participation in housing management and design; specific technical changes in government financing mechanisms (Starr is at his best when dealing with housing and the money market and recently published a good book on the subject). But for this reader at least the virtues of the housing proposals are overshadowed by the author's politics. Starr is unwilling to find the structure of our society and its economy at the source of the problems

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he so well describes. Finally his "analysis" reduces to the position that some people (lots—our entire "underclass" of nonworking poor, most of whom are black or brown) are basically inferior, which justifies Starr's proposal to isolate them from the rest of society. He refuses to understand that the profit system, corporate power, the organization of work (and nonwork), and capitalist social relations are all important factors. Neither our escalating housing problem nor other urban problems will be ameliorated until that insight informs our research and our strategies for change. □

Edmund Wilson in California: A Reappraisal

KENNETH LAMOTT

In the winter of 1924, Edmund Wilson, who was then 28, took the train to California on an unusal errand—to persuade Charlie Chaplin to dance in a pantomime ballet in which the Swedish Ballet was interested. Wilson himself had written the ballet, which he described in a letter to John Peale Bishop as a "great super-ballet of New York." Chaplin "laughed appreciatively" but couldn't be induced to take part. Wilson spent the rest of his time on the Coast pleasantly enough, visiting friends and taking notes.

His vision of California at this time was more generous than it was to become on subsequent visits. "The pink enormous mountains—the people grow to match the scenery—they expand out there more easily—they marry and divorce young—gigantic uncultivated beauties like the beauties of the prehistoric world—men playing and thriving in the raw magnificent landscapes of primordial processes and upheavals —the sun dropping into the Pacfiic and the red-gold holocaust of the sky."

As Wilson was to remark much later, California was "one of the strangest and most exotic of our adventures." Its foreignness gnawed at him. The pastel hues he saw in both natural and man-made California seemed to act as an unsettling contrast to the plainer colors of his ancestral home in Talcottville. When Wilson begins to fret at the softness of substance in California, at the lack of tension, one can't help being reminded of Robert Graves's description of him as essentially a confirmed Protestant individualist.

Beginning on this trip and continuing throughout Wilson's encounters with California, the Pacific Ocean itself became a symbol of the essence of the place. He saw an "opalescent sea crawling on the long shallow beach" and heard "the steady spaced Pacific crash —the ocean breaking outside, a series of slow soft explosions." This description might also serve as a metaphor for Wilson's later judgment of the literature produced along its shores.

Wilson returned East from this early visit by way of San Francisco, both to visit a female cousin and to call on Margaret Canby, who had once been engaged to his friend Ted Paramore. It never occurred to him that he would eventually marry the lady himself.

When Wilson returned to California four years later, it was largely to see Margaret Canby, who had in the meantime moved south to Santa Barbara. In his bags was the manuscript of *I Thought of Daisy*, which needed rewriting. As Wilson settled down to revise the novel and court Mrs. Canby (she was divorced), he wrote to Maxwell Perkins at Scribner's, "I have a little house here on the beach and have done nothing but read, write and swim. The weather is beautiful and all the days are exactly alike. The calm Pacific spaces are excellent for work—I always feel cramped in New York. But if you stayed out here very long, you would probably cease to write anything, because you would cease to think—it isn't necessary out here and the natives regard it as morbid."

Wilson also went to Hollywood, where he met Wilson Mizner (whom he didn't find amusing), visited Ted Paramore's mother, and spent a lot of time with Margaret Canby.

One day Wilson took Margaret to an amusement park where they had themselves photographed sitting in a goat cart in front of a photographer's backdrop. A handsome, dark-haired woman, Margaret is holding the reins and smiling into the camera. Wilson, wearing a suit with a vest and holding a straw skimmer in one hand, doesn't look at ease. He is regarding the goat (surely stuffed) with an expression of faint distate that foreshadows the glower that developed with age.

As if seen through a painter's eyes, Wilson's notes of this trip are full of colors, shapes and the quality of the light, sometimes self-consciously so: "Down at Carpinteria, with the answering pink and blue of sea and sky (the pink against the blue sky a little cheap and ugly—too pretty) with the mountain in the middle. Swimming at sunset—how soft the islands lie—Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa—on the dreamy misted horizon. The sun makes the water pink against its own blue, and the islands are blue against the sun's pink, against the western sky. An earthly paradise—a little soft and cloying—the seascapes are bonbons for the eye."

He went back East in December to spend Christmas with his daughter Rosalind in Red Bank. Wilson married Margaret Canby in 1930. (She was to die as the result of a fall in Santa Barbara two years later.)

In 1931, Wilson wound up in California again at the end of the reportorial trip across the country that became *The American Jitters*. The California

Kenneth Lamott is a novelist who lives in California.

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articles included an essay on the phenomenon of Los Angeles, a report of the experiences of the Russian director Eisenstein in Hollywood, a hymn of praise to the hotel at Coronado Beach, and a consideration of why so many people in San Diego kill themselves.

Wilson's vision of California begins to harden during this trip. His Protestant soul asserts itself, like the soul of a Presbyterian missionary in the South Seas who feels himself on the edge of being seduced by the voluptuous life under the coconut palms. Like the missionary he strikes back to save himself. He has fun with two eminent Los Angeles preachers, one of whom is a demotic type who owns a private radio station and the other a Yale graduate who wishes he too had a radio station, but the piece with the most meat to it inquires into the suggestive fact that San Diego—a pretty, subtropical place—has the highest suicide rate in the country.

Wilson's answer to the puzzle of the California suicide rate (it is still the highest in the country) is a truly Protestant one, and I do not say this in an unfriendly spirit. Many people come to California, he tells us, to escape from their problems, whether these are physical, spiritual, or financial; they discover, of course, that their problems have accompanied them to the Promised Land. And then (Wilson wrote), "Among the sand-colored hotels and power plants, the naval outfitters and waterside cafés, the old spread-roofed California houses with their fine grain of gray or yellow clapboards—they come to the end of their resources in the empty California sun."

Almost ten years later, Wilson set himself to read the novelists who were then living and writing in California. Essays on James M. Cain, John O'Hara, William Saroyan, John Steinbeck and Hans Otto Storm appeared in *The New Republic* in November and December 1940, followed by a piece about California and the Californians. In the next year the Colt Press of San Francisco collected these essays plus a postscript in a slender, handsome edition of 1,500 copies under the title *The Boys in the Back Room*. (The postscript lamented the death on December 21 and 22, 1940, of Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West and their "failure to get the best out of their best years.")

Thirty-six years later, *The Boys in the Back Room* holds up remarkably well, both in its literary judgments and in its vision of California.

Let me quote from the essays on the novelists:

Cain: "Mr. Cain is the *âme damnée* of Hollywood. All the things that the Catholic censorship has excluded: sex, debauchery, unpunished crime, and sacrilege against the Catholic Church—Mr. Cain has let all these loose, with a gusto as of pent-up ferocity that the reader cannot but share. What a pity that it is impossible for such a writer to create and produce his own pictures!"

O'Hara: "That social surface, then, Mr. O'Hara analyzes with delicacy, and usually with remarkable accuracy. His grasp of what lies underneath it is, however, not so sure. His point of view toward his principal characters tends to be rather clinical; but even where his diagnosis is clear, we do not share the experience of the sufferer."

Saroyan: "It is true that he has a natural felicity of touch which prevents him from being offensive or tiresome in any of the more obvious ways; and his stories and soliloquies at their best have the quality of the spontaneous songs of one of those composers who know nothing about music but find instinctively the right melodies for their moods. Yet Saroyan is in error in supposing when he 'says it wrong,' everything is really all right. What is right in such a case is merely this instinctive sense of form which usually saves him—and even when he's clowning—from making a fool of himself."

Steinbeck: "Mr. Steinbeck has invention, observation, a certain color of style which some reason does not possess what is called magic. None of his novels seems to me precisely first-rate. He has provided a panorama of California farm-life and California landscape which is unique in our literature; and there are passages in some ways so brilliant that we are troubled at being forced to recognize there is something artistically bad about them."

These judgments strike me as being forthright and just. The concluding essay, "Facing the Pacific," considers the broader question of why California writers appear not "to carry a weight proportionate to the bulk of their work." In this brief essay we hear echoes of the young man who made notes about the scenery when he went to Hollywood to try to interest Chaplin in his ballet and returned to court Margaret Canby and wonder about the suicides in San Diego. It is an intensely Protestant essay.

"All visitors from the East know the strange spell of unreality which seems to make human experience on the Coast as hollow as the life of a troll-nest where everything is out in the open instead of being underground," Wilson begins. The hollowness, he guesses, "is partly no doubt a matter of climate: the empty sun and the incessant rains; and of landscape: the dry mountains and the vast void of Pacific space; the hypnotic rhythms of day and night that revolve with unblurred uniformity, and of the surf that seems to roll up the beach with a purposeless expressionless beat after the moody assaults of the Atlantic."

Californians today, even more than when Wilson was writing, tend to congratulate themselves on facing the Far East, as if their proficiency with chopsticks and their Japanified interior decoration represent strong and nutritious elements that encourage the growth of a genuine transpacific culture. But, as Wilson observes, for white Americans the communication with the Orient is slight and doesn't make up at all for the distance from the East and Europe. This is still true, even in the age of the jet plane.

Looking at Hollywood ("which swarms and crawls with writers"), Wilson takes a poke at Aldous Huxley because, in his California novel, *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, he seems to be "well on his way to becoming a second-rate American novelist." Wilson recommends Anita Loos's satire *The Better Things of Life* and writes about the influence of the movies on fiction, observing that *The Grapes of Wrath* "went on the screen as easily as if it had been written in the studios, and was probably the only serious story on record that seemed equally effective as a film and as a book."

Wilson believed that the radical tradition of Frank Norris, Jack London and Upton Sinclair had contributed the single element that put some iron into the literature of California in the 1930s. (This accounts for his regard for Hans Otto Storm, an engineer who wrote novels from a perspective on the Left.) But without the productive tension that was created during the heroic days of the labor movement, California literature tends to become diffuse and empty. Even Robinson Jeffers's dogged attempts at the bold, monstrous, and epic "are all like cloud dramas that fade away to sea, leaving only on our faces a slight moisture and in our ears an echo of hissing."

The justness of Wilson's rigorous judgment of California literature is unhappily validated by the collective works of the state's novelists since World War II. Things have changed but not all that much.

A lot of Californians have written a lot of books since the 1930s but I don't know of a recent critical survey of Cali-

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fornia's literary landscape that improves on Wilson's depression era book. Any revisionist critic will first have to come to grips with *The Boys in the Back Room* and dispose of its argument. It won't be easy.

As Wilson wrote about California toward the end of *The Boys*, "it is not merely in Los Angeles that the purposes and passions of humanity have the appearance of playing their roles in a great open-air amphitheater which lacks not only acoustics to heighten and clarify the speeches but even an attentive audience at whom they may be directed."

Alas, this too is still true. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Akira Kurosawa, the eminent Japanese director, has worked with a Russian cast and with Moscow film facilities to produce *Dersu Uzala, the Hunter*, a fabulously beautiful film of men moving through the limitless forest, lake and river country of the Siberian taiga, hard by the Chinese border. The magnificently photographed scenes of this enticing and dangerous region, and the play of weather upon it, justify the two hours and more of the movie's running time; indeed, there is not a great deal more to it. Kurosawa based it on two pre-World War I stories of the region by Vladimir Arseniev; it concerns the friendship that develops between a Russian army surveyor (Yuri Solomin) and Dersu Uzala (Maxim Munzuk), an Asian tribesman who acts as guide to the small Russian expedition.

It is a romantic, a very "pure" story. Each of the men represents the virtues of his own culture; each comes to understand, trust and love the other as they share hardships, accomplishments and sudden extreme dangers. The theme is probably more familiar to Americans than to either Russians or Japanese—most of us were raised on James Fenimore Cooper and must be forgiven if Kurosawa's film seems a nostalgic return to innocence. Dersu stands easily enough for Cooper's "good" and nature-wise Indian; the bad ones are supplied, conveniently for current ideological conflicts, by a band of Chinese "bandits," who raid across the frontier, seizing women, killing their men and treating the indigenous fauna with callous disregard for all God's creatures. This episode was perhaps hauled in by the ears at Russian behest: we never see the wicked Chinese or their victims (save for a couple of bound and almost drowned men) but a large posse of avenging tribesmen does suddenly emerge from the marshland.

Except for these few moments, human conflict is quite peripheral to the picture; its great theme is the communion of man with nature, Dersu acting as the gentle instructor of the uncouth, vulnerable troopers from civilization. And Munzuk brings freshness and some wit to a role that would otherwise by a rather late-in-the-day celebration of the noble savage. Squat, bowlegged, burdened with a cumbersome pack, he trots through the rough country with a jaunty ease. In camp at night his round, leathery face flickers with intelligence, his small, sharp eyes laughing with indulgent courtesy at the gaffes of his clumsy charges. But Dersu is not young and toward the end his eyes begin to fail him. He consents then to accompany the officer back to town. Of course, it doesn't work: Dersu makes the tragicomic errors traditional for a "primitive" man transplanted to the world of streets and houses. His dignity is compromised, he feels stifled by walls, he goes back to the forest to die.

Kurosawa says in a *World Cinema* interview: "The message I would like to convey to all people is that conservation of Nature is now imperative. Our planet may someday become unfit for human life unless a vigorous conservation campaign is launched immediately." That, I think, is a little naive of Kurosawa. Dersu, to be sure, was a kind of conservationist; so was Natty Bumppo, and so are all hunters, trappers and forest nomads. But the problem today is not solvable by a "back to nature" movement—we're stuck with industrial civilization because, if for no other reason, there are so many of us, and Dersu's lore of the forest is a magic game for children. Kurosawa has filmed it with great artistry; he makes one yearn for what has been lost. That is a kind of sad pleasure, but somewhat debilitating.

Joseph Conrad is not the easiest writer to bring over to the screen. His settings and the physical action of his plots come across all too easily—a camera revels in them—but Conrad, who was born within a year of Freud, was interested essentially in the tragedy of the mind, and on the screen that somehow gets lost in the melodrama of the senses. I say this without having read the Conrad short story on which Ridley Scott has based *The Duellists*, his first feature picture. The script by Gerald Vaughan-Hughes provides a marvelous kaleidoscope of Europe in the years of the Napoleonic Wars, but the narrative is a simple-minded affair that offers little notion of what Conrad must have had on his mind.

The film opens in Strasbourg in 1800, where we "discover" Gabriel Feraud (Harvey Keitel), a French lieutenant of Hussars, dueling with a civilian who, it turns out, is the nephew of the Mayor of the city. The townsman is seriously wounded, and the Mayor complains bitterly to the commanding general, who sends another young officer named Armand D'Hubert (Keith Carradine) to order Feraud back to his quarters, there to await his commander's pleasure. Feraud, who we at once understand is a little mad, in addition to being entirely odious, contrives to find himself insulted by D'Hubert's entirely passive role in this affair and demands "satisfaction."

In those days "honor" was a fetish among gentlemen and for the likes of Feraud it was an obsession. Normally, a duel in which one of the adversaries is wounded settled the matter, but Feraud is so offended by D'Hubert's quite imaginary slur that he can be appeased only by his enemy's death. He does not achieve it at the first encounter and the fortunes of the army

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separate them for a time.

Then, every few years, their paths cross again, and each time Feraud summons the reluctant but conventional D'Hubert to the field of honor. They fight with sabers, they fight with broadswords; they fight afoot and on horseback; they fire at each other with muzzle-loading pistols. Finally, after Waterloo, with D'Hubert happily established as a family man and a general in the service of Louis XVIII, and Feraud an embittered Napoleonic zealot living in provincial exile imposed by Fouché (Albert Finney), they pursue each other through a romantic ruin that hangs, I believe, on a bluff above the River Lot. There D'Hubert comes to terms with his nemesis.

So what? This ugly game of honor is one old folly that we have managed to outgrow; its last flicker was in the ritualistic swordplay of the German universities, with every young popinjay cherishing his scarred cheek to the amused contempt of the rest of Europe. Keitel, in this film, plays a revolting brawler, to be excused only on the ground that he is almost certainly unhinged. For Carradine's D'Hubert there is really no excuse—he puts up with the lethal nonsense simply because he is too subservient to the mores of his time and class to expose his adversary as a dangerous lunatic. Even at the end he prevails within the terms of Feraud's code, when he should have had the man seized and confined. It is a long picture and an active one, but nothing really happens.

The Duellists is richly decorated (and provided with quantities of swooning music). On a physical level it is well performed by an expert cast, and it offers the splendid landscapes, riotous scenes, quaint customs, peacock males and low-bodiced damsels one expects of every expensive costume drama. As such it is a fair treat, though after a time one begins to dread the next, predictable sanguinary encounter; the progress is nothing if not mechanical. It seems impossible that Conrad could have been seriously interested in honor at that level. I must look up the story. □

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THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

American Buffalo, David Mamet's best play thus far, has been followed by several others which he wrote earlier. *Reunion*, presented at Yale, was superior to *A Life in the Theatre*, a bit of highly overrated juvenilia that was even more warmly received than the other two. Now, still another early play, *The Water Engine*, rewritten since it was first given in Chicago, has been accorded "Parthenon" quality and greeted with such hosannas as were never bestowed upon O'Neill, Odets, Williams, Miller, Albee or David Rabe at the start of their careers. Mamet is not to be blamed for any of this hawking and puffing: it merely indicates the state of most of our journalistic theatre criticism—if one can call it that.

The Water Engine, now being shown in the Cabaret section of the Public Theatre, is a clever one-hour sketch; it is not, as it is widely and feverishly proclaimed, a consummate achievement. It is placed in the Chicago of the 1930s. A young man invents an engine that uses water as fuel. Corporate interests, threatened by it, try to buy the rights; failing that, they do everything possible to prevent its general release, and end by murdering its inventor. Along with this basic story we hear the apparently futile radical outcry against the criminal maneuvers of the monopolies during the boomingly advertised Century of Progress. The bright ending has it that the radical orator's little boy has hidden the draft of the inventor's work plan so that his engine may be saved for public use.

What is ingenious in the handling of this by no means extraordinary material is that all of it becomes grist to the mill of commercial radio. The realities and human tragedy involved in the story are drained of genuine content, their social implication flattened and vulgarized by making nothing more of them than crassly melodramatic entertainment. We observe the mechanics of production at the radio station. The steely, impersonal efficiency of the procedure becomes, with humorous emphasis, typical of industrial civilization. Thus the sting of the events must fail to produce any cogent public effect. Everything is desensitized, rendered null and void.

This satirical scheme is provocative; the trouble is that it succeeds only too well. We assent to its purpose but are not made really to care. The objectivity of the demonstration may strike one as technically admirable but it does not get beneath the skin; it arouses no quiver of indignation. What we may feel at most is a detached and self-congratulatory contempt, in almost the same way as the play's radio coverage kills off the implicit drama of its story. As I left the theatre, "very nice job," I thought, with John Lee Beatty's eye-catching set and acting of assembly-line efficiency under Steven Schachter's direction. But I was no more stirred, aesthetically or in my social consciousness, than by a striking but slightly puzzling poster implying, "Down with the Big Shots and Their Stinking System," but not actually persuasive.

Do You Turn Somersaults? by Aleksei Arbuzov (46th Street Theatre) is a slight, sentimental comedy, as "simple

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and agreeable as apple pie," to quote from something I wrote about it for the Kennedy Center playbill on reading the translation of the original script. One might take it or leave it, and if one chooses the latter course, as some of the reviewers declared one should, no great harm (except financial) would ensue. It is chiefly a "vehicle" for Mary Martin and Anthony Quayle and the occasion for very pretty sets by Oliver Smith.

I think it only fair, however, to state that Arbuzov, one of the ablest and most successful of Soviet playwrights, had something more in mind when he wrote *Old World*, as the play was originally called, than what the preceding paragraph notes. His play, the "love story" of an elderly doctor and a woman patient of like age, was a cagey satire on Soviet conformism. The woman is in a sanatorium not, as the present adaptation has it, to be treated for arteriosclerosis but because she has been committed for her inability to fit the strait-laced pattern of correct behavior expected "long ago" (1968) in the Soviet Union. To "distance" the play even further, Arbuzov has also set it in Riga (Latvia), as if the woman's eccentricity would seem more suspicious there than in Moscow or Leningrad.

According to sanatorium standards (in the context, sanatorium is an ominous word), she gives all the wrong answers to the doctor's questions. She requires a "cure" because she is "independent in everything I do." Her conduct, the amiably quiescent doctor tells her, has given rise to a number of complaints, the first of which is that her actions keep people from sleeping. Told that she has an extraordinary talent for reducing everything to nothing, her reply is, "I try to keep up with the times." When the couple, as they become more friendly, go out to a restaurant and he proposes to dance the supposedly unseemly Charleston and shimmy, there is mention of arrest by the police. In the present production the remark means nothing.

If our theatre programs were as properly informative as are those at the subsidized theatres in England, we might learn that Arbuzov's plays generally tend to poke fun at, if not exactly to criticize, the increasing bureaucratic stultification of Soviet society—all very gently and cutely, to be sure, but that may be as much as is possible on the Soviet stage.

It occurred to me as I watched Martin's and Quayle's cozy performances that in a Russian production the play's comedy as well as its sentiment would be enriched by that underlying Russian ache—a sense, even in its cheeriest moments, that all of life is fleeting. It is a sort of anticipatory nostalgia. There is a certain sweetness, a fullness of feeling in that realization. It is the ever present ground tone of Russian literature, music, acting, a warmly accepted and appreciated melancholy that is still part of "the joy of life." □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

"Cubist Syntax in the 70s" (Ingber Gallery, until February 1) is an unexpected show in which five artists, aged between 35 and 40, have set themselves to do Cubism again. The theme, a matter of principle, originated with the artists themselves; it was not invented by the gallery. There are two sculptors, two painters and an assemblagist, only one of whom has a prior reputation. He is Gerald Laing, who used to do skinny minimal sculpture with allusions to automobile chrome lines and Art Deco. Now his work resembles that of the conservative sculptors who, like Raymond Duchamp-Villon and Henri Laurens, solidified Cubist painting, turning the complex transparencies of Analytical Cubism into simple masses.

There were two routes for Cubist-influenced sculpture to go, this traditional monumentalizing in a single medium, or the three-dimensional expansion of collage that led to Russian constructivism. The other sculptor in the show, Modris Ramans, imitates the shifting linear armature of Analytical Cubism in welded steel, painted violet or pink, like a customized motorcycle. His sources are clear in his drawings of *personages* which resemble paraphrases by David Smith of Picasso's influential drawing of 1932, "An Anatomy" (figures composed of spare parts).

George Parrino paints flat, sharp-edged images of women, called "Pieces," a blunt pun referring both to art works and to women as his subject matter. His colors are sober but peppery purples, brown, ocher, yellow, navy blue. These colors, mixed up with cues for breasts, eyes, legs and buttocks, make his work look like agitated Picassos of around 1927, but painted by Juan Gris. The effect of tits, asses and big eyes, bobbing about in a jocose Cubist context is rather like that of the work of Knox Martin, who moved Picasso's bathers from the beach at Dinard to Coney Island some years ago. (He has a mural on a building in midtown Manhattan.) And in fact Martin has written

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THE MAN-FISH
[Postojna Caves, Slovenia]

Salamander
elixir among creatures
webbed in water
at home in rock's
most secret places
walker through fire.

Across the karst plain
pitted by lime and bomb
men went to the mountains
into the caves
their first and last stronghold:
come and hear the drip
drip of history down the walls
where daylight
ended in a row of stars
come and see
proteus anguinus
the Man-Fish
with pink-brown skin
a real salamander
in his pool.

He can swim
he can outwit the wolf
he can outlive the oven
he is the finger of God:
the lights blaze
but he has not yet grown eyes.

Keith Bosley

not about Parrino but about Ramans in a text that draws attention to the "eroticism" of Ramans's welded sculptures.

Ramans, in his turn, has written on Parrino in *Arts Magazine* (November 1976). He proposes a general revival of interest in Cubism by citing the recent work of Frank Stella which is planar and overlapping—compared to the anti-Cubist continuous field of his earlier work. He instances as an originality of Parrino's that "his Venus is a pin-up" and enlarges on this as something American, compared to French art. However, he does so in terms derived almost entirely from Thomas B. Hess's praise for de Kooning's earlier paintings of women, so perhaps we have in Parrino not only Cubist syntax but Abstract Expressionist content.

Stuart Diamond alludes to the 1950s in another way. Both works shown at the Ingber Gallery set up a rectangular core by means of a wooden form like a stretcher or frame, with extensions sideways, beyond the edges, and extrusions fore and aft of the implied picture plane. These bits and pieces are daubed with paint to suggest the color of painting within the unruly literal materials. This could be viewed as an extrapolation of collage, but it looks more like a revival of the junk sculpture of the 1950s. The other painter, Steve Conley, does abstract quasi-Cubist paintings in which he mixes two kinds of mark. There are black strips and patches, flat and solidly there on the canvas, and tonally graduated forms which imply illusory spaces. These resemble the crinkled imagery of 1960s abstract painters in which canvases were creased, painted while rucked up, and then stretched to reveal the pattern of creases. Thus, as with Ramans and Parrino, there seems to be a recent American source for Diamond's work hidden in that Cubism.

Robert Goldwater, reviewing Clement Greenberg's *Art and Culture* (1961), pointed out that the author was preoccupied with Cubism and its inheritance. The definition of a post-Cubist space was important to the Abstract Expressionist generation on whose behalf Greenberg was writing. This was not only a formal revision; it was also the latest phase of an argument between the New World and the Old with roots in the 19th century. John Tagg (in *Praxis*, Winter 1976) put the matter succinctly, pointing out that the Abstract Expressionists "sought not only to extend the now-exhausted European tradition but also to make a specifically American contribution to it." Thus there was in the relationship an ambiguous mixture of dependence and transcendence, of continuity and rupture. European art conferred centrality on the artist, but since its traditions could be surpassed, there was a sense of victory as well.

The question is: are the Cubist revival artists engaged in some such wrestling match in which the American present is matched with the European past? The context is traditional but of real consequence in the definition of the American imagination. It appears that the Old World/New World antithesis was mediated by other factors here. The links mentioned above to Knox Martin, de Kooning, assemblage, David Smith, and 1960s abstract painting all bring in the recent American past. The new artists draw on a European main line and, at the same time, on a clandestine Americanism. They are setting one tradition against another, not individuality against conformity. Instead of Americans dissenting from oppressive precedent, they are setting American precedent against European. The relation of these artists to Cubism is very different from that of New World revisionism versus Old World Alexandrianism.

If I am right, the use of Cubism, openly declared in the title of the exhibition, and the use of native models, undeclared, are compatible. Both are aspects of a sophisticated play with styles: the reinterpretation of long-term European precedent by means of short-term American example presumes a high level of information. Their deftness with traditional styles suggests a kind of neoconservative knowingness, in which the artificiality of art is recognized and the desire to transcend it is taken to be an affectation or a pretense. The Cubist revival is a witty stance, based not on confidence in the artists' capacity to signify meaning but on the assumption of art's liberating nonutility. Thus the formalism that it seems to reject by the fusion of Cubism and American sensibility is actually dependent on the formalist criteria of aesthetic cultivation and detachment. □

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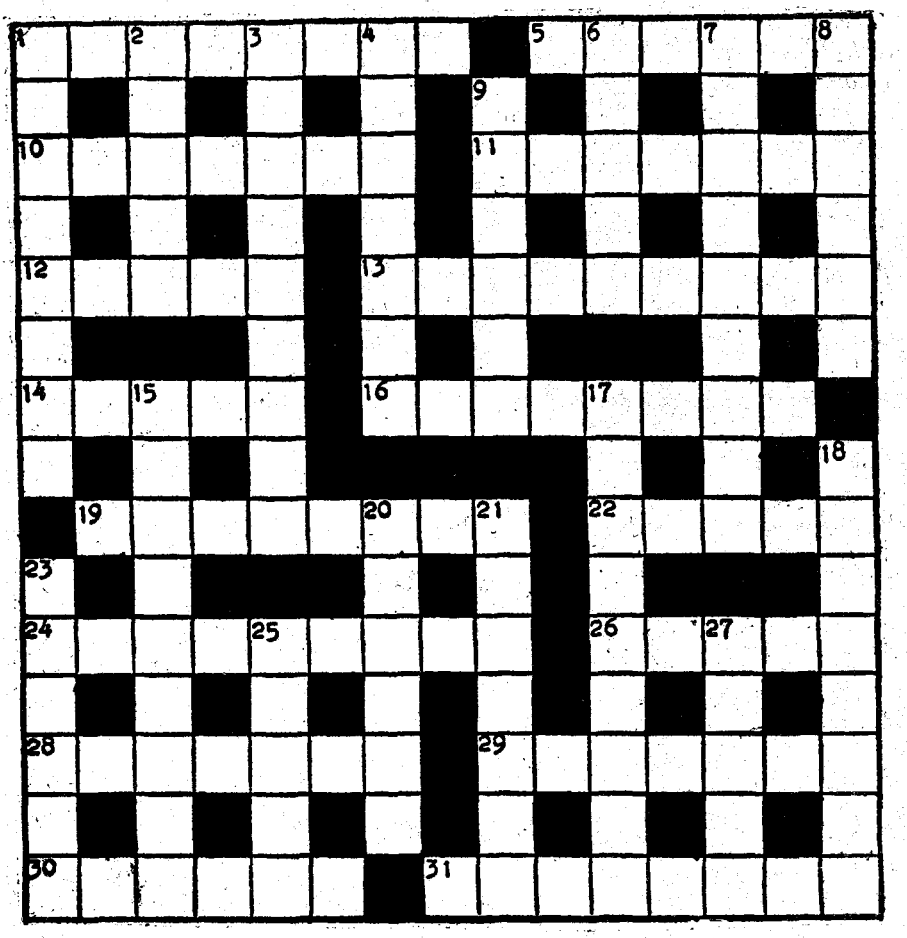
Crossword Puzzle No. 1711

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1, 22 and 9 down Almost sounds as though the sausage hasn't been delivered, but things are now comparatively good. (3,5,2,3,2,4)
5 and 12 Evidently an enduring husband and wife relationship. (They even wear the same colors.) (11)
10 Vain outburst, with the summer in Paris being simplicity itself. (7)
11 Open a rather large number placed inside ham, perhaps. (7)
12 See 5 across
13 Tender, concerning animals. (9)
14 Hercules had to kill a lion from here. (5)
16 The woman faces death of a sort, as the weapon is put away. (8)
19 Certainly not a working discussion.(4,4)
22 See 1 across
24 She would never believe 1-22-9! (9)
26 She makes up the last letter in "Lamb". (5)
28 A feeling of cold on a famous dungeon here. (7)
29 Those that 11 might be doing this too much. (7)
30 A no-no time, according to the movie. (6)
31 Sounds like a running course for misbehavior, as a symptom. (8)

DOWN

1 In principle, people make a dwelling place. (8)
2 The old Roman is about eleven; you'll see it live! (5)
3 To exaggerate where the governor is placed? (9)
4 With cold air emitted forcibly if one does. (7)
6 The first person as a subject? (5)
7 By lamp, she makes up an ungodly expression. (9)
8 Acts like 27 seems to. (6)
9 See 1 across
15 Decoration for a prize animal? (9)
17 Evidently such literary tales bear repeating. (5-4)
18 What original thugs did might cause a lack of inspiration. (8)
20 In such a wing an otherwise protective device? (6)
21 What Jack indulges in, when a bad boy? (7)
23 Such times were bad for Cheops. (6)
25 Conference of war here. (5)
27 Mr. Jones obviously had designs, and seems ready to take the plunge. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 1710

ACROSS: 1 and 12 Come up and see me sometime; 9 Melodic; 10 Skaters; 11 Assure; 14 Swindle; 15 Pages; 17 Doone; 19 Literal; 21 Overpass; 23 Smiths; 25 Eyehole; 26 Unnerve; 27 and 21 down After the Ball is Over. DOWN 1 Commanded; 2 Molests; 3 Under fire; 4 Arch; 5 Dishonesty; 6 Evade; 7 Meeting; 8 Ashe; 13 Adolescent; 15 Pyromania; 16 Spinsters; 18 Oneself; 20 Lateral; 22 and 24 Prosecute.

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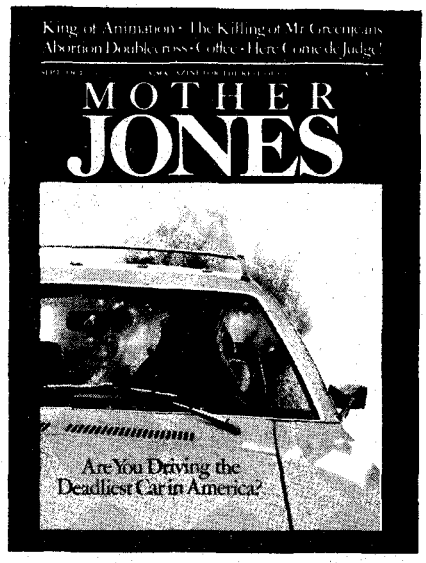

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